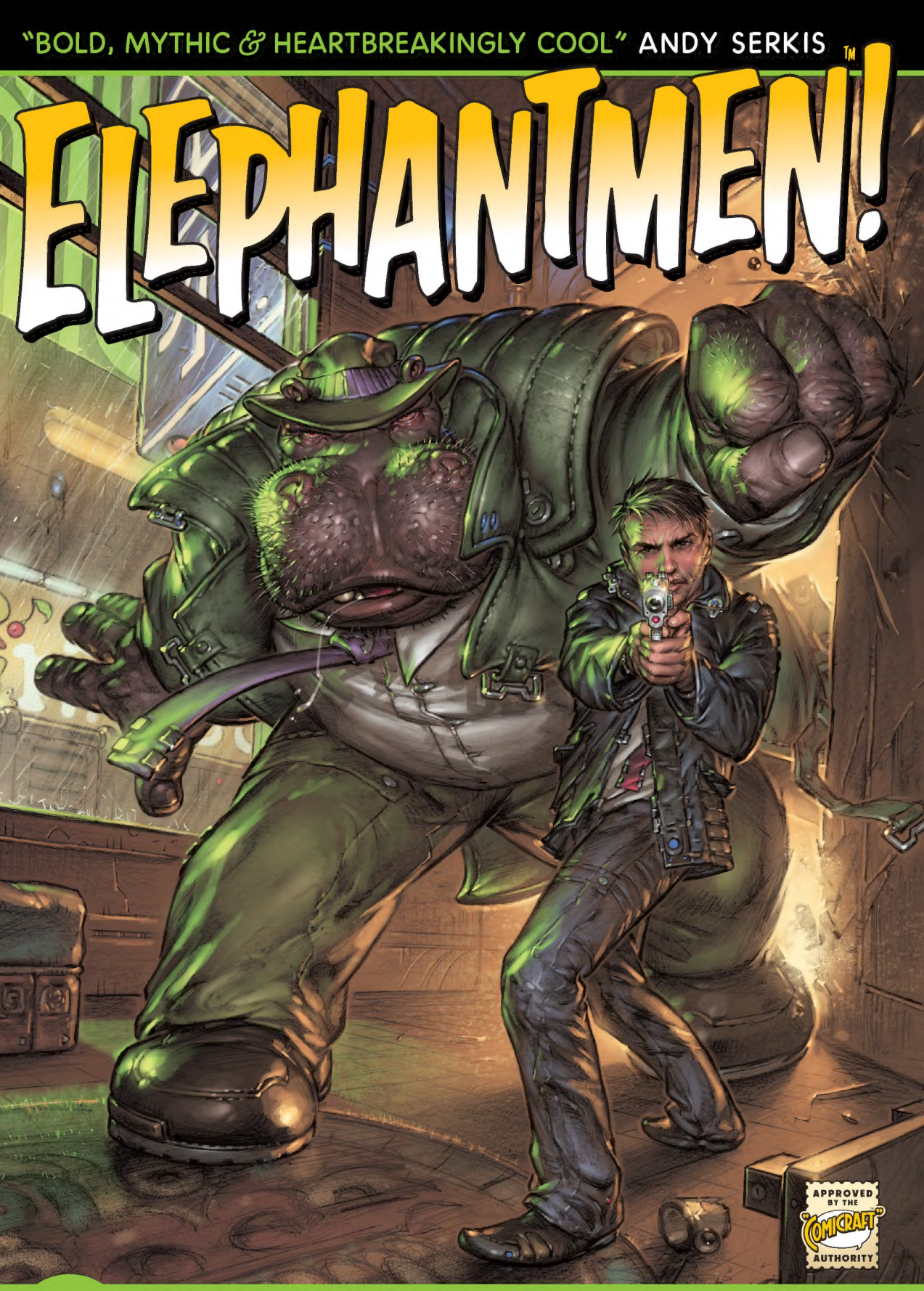
"BOLD, MYTHIC & HEARTBREAKINGLY COOL" ANDY SERKIS

ELEPHANTMEN!™



2260 BOOK ONE

"MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE"

STARKINGS · MEDELLIN · COOK · LOTAY · ROSHELL

IMAGE COMICS *presents*

ELEPHANTMEN

By RICHARD STARKINGS *story & lettering* AXEL MEDELLIN *art* • BOO COOK *cover art*

22nd

MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE

RICHARD STARKINGS
President & First Tiger

JOHN 'JG' ROSHELL
Secret Weapon

JOSEPH MICHAEL LINSNER
Back Cover Art

IMAGE COMICS, INC.
Robert Kirkman – Chief Operating Officer
Erik Larsen – Chief Financial Officer
Todd McFarlane – President
Marc Silvestri – Chief Executive Officer
Jim Valentino – Vice-President
Eric Stephenson – Publisher
Ron Richards – Director of Business Development
Jennifer de Guzman – Director of Trade Book Sales
Kat Salazar – Director of PR & Marketing
Jeremy Sullivan – Director of Digital Sales
Emilio Bautista – Sales Assistant
Branwyn Bigglestone – Senior Accounts Manager
Emily Miller – Accounts Manager
Jessica Ambriz – Administrative Assistant
Tyler Shainline – Events Coordinator
David Brothers – Content Manager
Jonathan Chan – Production Manager
Drew Gill – Art Director
Meredith Wallace – Print Manager
Monica Garcia – Senior Production Artist
Jenna Savage – Production Artist
Addison Duke – Production Artist
Tricia Ramos – Production Assistant
IMAGECOMICS.COM

ELEPHANTMEN: 2260 VOLUME 1: MEMORIES OF THE FUTURE. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: 2001 Center Street, 6th floor, Berkeley, California 94704. Copyright © 2014 Active Images. Originally published in single magazine form as ELEPHANTMEN #51-55. All rights reserved. HIPFLASK®, MYSTERY CITY™ and ELEPHANTMEN™ (including all prominent characters featured herein), its logo and all character likenesses are trademarks of Active Images, unless otherwise noted. Image Comics® is a trademark of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for review purposes) without the express written permission of Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events or places, without satiric intent, is coincidental.
DIGITAL EDITION.

#1
BOO COOK cover art

Blood Red

Richard Starkings
Words

Axel Medellin
Pictures

LOS ANGELES · 2260

So what happened here?
Did he cheat on her?
Did she cheat on him?
A death pact? Double suicide?
Maybe it's staged to look that way.
Maybe they knew something.
Perhaps they'd been selling designer drugs to a Bent Cop who wanted to keep them quiet.
Maybe the girl came from the wrong side of the tracks and some Joe with a chip on his shoulder from her past came looking for her .
Or maybe this guy'd gotten tangled up with one of those "Hookers with a heart of gold" looking for a blackmail payment.
Maybe it was just a jealous woman who couldn't have what she wanted.
WHMP
WELL, WHICH ONE IS IT, FARRELL?
BEATS ME, SWEETHEART, I JUST GOT HERE--
WHAT THE HELL--?

COULD BE THE KILLER IS STILL IN THE BUILDING.

SEEMS KINDA UNLIKELY, GIVEN THAT L.A.P.D *DRONES* ALREADY SWEPT THE PLACE...

STAY HERE, I MEAN, YOU KNOW... STAY--

STAY PUT, KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

Ah! *MEMORIES*, JACK.

DON'T WORRY, I KNOW THE DRILL...

IT'LL BE LIKE I'M NOT EVEN HERE.

GOOD GIRL.

WHNCH

Oh SH!T.

AND IN CASE I DIDN'T MAKE MYSELF *COMPLETELY* CLEAR--

WAKT

WHOA!
THAT'S ENOUGH, BIG GUY.
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT BEEF YOU TWO MIGHT BE GRINDING, BUT I THINK THERE'S ENOUGH BLOOD SPILT IN THE BUILDING ALREADY.
Oh YEAH? THEN MAYBE YOUR FRIEND HERE MIGHT WANT TO RECONSIDER THE WORDS HE CHOOSES WHEN HE GREETS AN INFORMATION AGENT--?

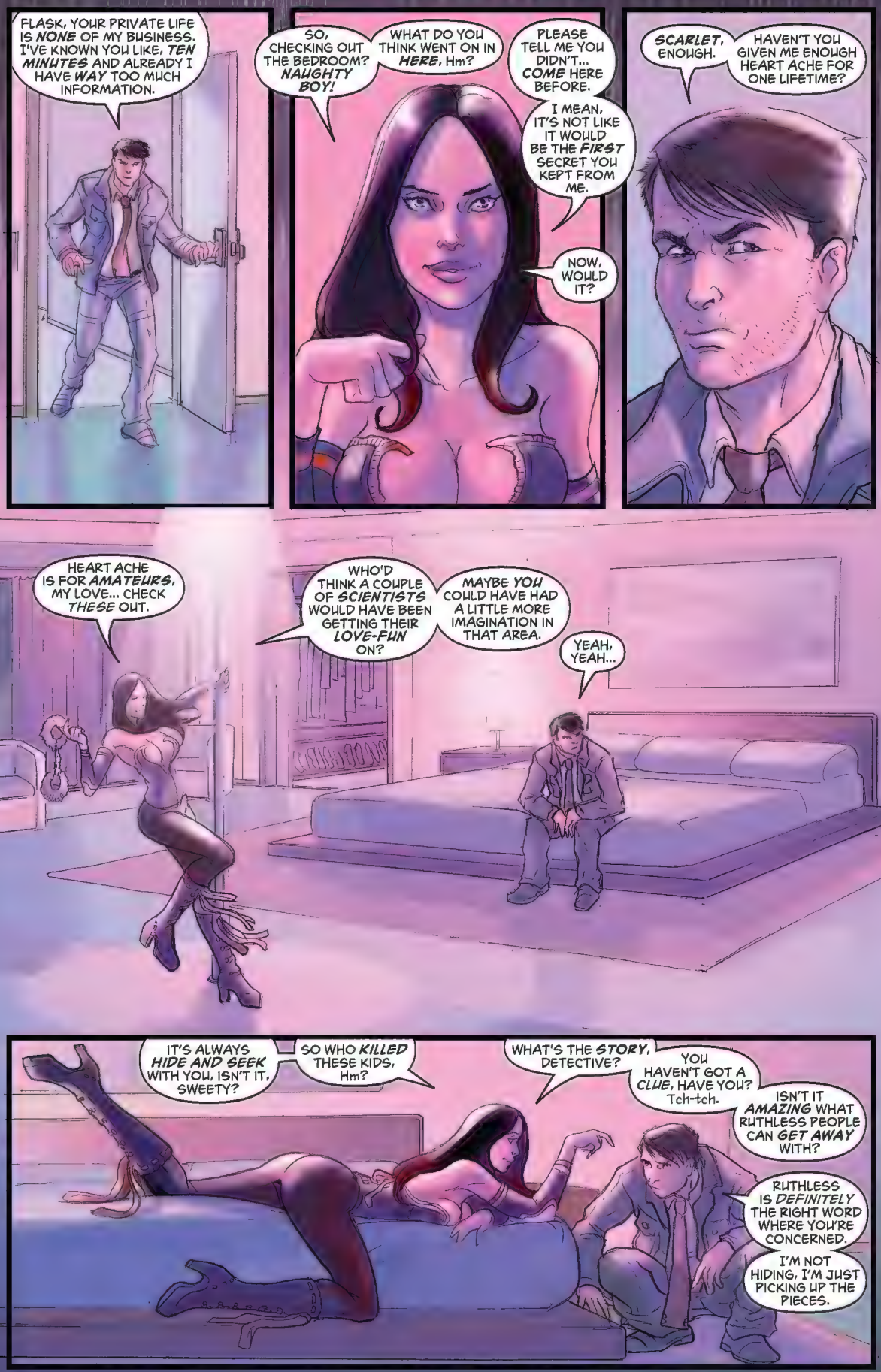
HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DONE.
HE'S A MUNT THINKS HE'S A MAN.
SNITCHES ON HIS OWN KIND.
GIMME A BREAK.
I JUST MIGHT BREAK SUMTHIN'...
BOY Oh BOY...
YOU GOTTA BE HIP FLASK FROM THE INFORMATION AGENCY, RIGHT?
SO, LISTEN, MY "FRIEND HERE" IS THE SUPER OF THE BUILDING.
HE'S THE GUY CALLED IN THE CRIME. SO, Y'KNOW, BACK OFF.
STICKS AND STONES. AGENT FLASK, GET OVER IT, OKAY?
LET'S, Uh, LET'S GET DOWN TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME AND DO THE WORK WE CAME HERE TO DO, YEAH?
HEY, HOW DO ELEPHANTMEN GET DOWN THOSE TEENY STAIRS ANYWAY?
ELEVATOR.

ELEPHANTMEN
El•e•phant•men [el-uh-fuhnt-men]
noun:
1. Transgenics; human/animal hybrids, genetically engineered by the MAPPO Corporation for military deployment in the Afro-Sino War (2239-2243). Rehabilitated by the United Nations, these creatures were gradually inculcated into human society.
2. Derogatory term for such.

PING!
THE MAX DAOUDI BUILDING
YOU KNOW, I WAS TOLD YOU WERE A HARD ASS...
COULD IT BE THEY MEANT LARD ASS?!
MOVE!
AND TAKE YOUR FREAKING HAT AND COAT OFF!
I DON'T WANT YOU KNOCKING OVER EVIDENCE!
OKAY, BUT FORENSIX RAN A WHOLE SCAN OF THE APARTMENT BEFORE WE GOT HERE.
YEAH, AND FRANKLY I'D BE OUT OF A JOB IF THEIR FINDINGS WERE WORTH THE BINARY CODE THEY'RE WRITTEN IN.
LISTEN, JUST -- JUST, DON'T..
DON'T SIT ON ANY FURNITURE!
Y'KNOW, THIS IS NOT MY FIRST CRIME SCENE, PAL!

OKAY, MISTER INFORMATION AGENT -- *TALK ME THROUGH IT*. IS THIS A ***MURDER/SUICIDE***, A ***DOUBLE HOMICIDE***, OR WHAT?
Huh, OKAY... WELL, THEY HAVE A ***REAL*** NICE PLACE HERE, THEY'RE CERTAINLY NOT SHORT OF ***MONEY***.
SO EITHER THEY'RE ***EXTREMELY*** WELL PAID OR THEY HAVE SOMETHING GOING ON THE ***SIDE***...
COULD BE A ***DEATH PACT***, OR IT COULD HAVE BEEN ***STAGED*** TO MAKE US THINK THIS MAN KILLED HIS WIFE HERE, THEN HIMSELF...
"YET THEY POURED DRINKS, AND BARELY ***TOUCHED*** THEM..."
"HE SAT DOWN, KICKED HIS SHOES OFF...
"LOOSENED HIS TIE -- DIDN'T EVEN TAKE TIME TO TAKE THE WORK *I-D* OFF OF HIS SHIRT."
NO SIGN OF ***FORCED ENTRY*** THOUGH.
AND THERE ARE ***HER*** SHOES BY THE DOOR.
THIS IS NO ***DEATH PACT***, THEY WERE JUST KICKING BACK AFTER A HARD DAY.
JUST A COUPLA RESEARCH SCIENTISTS RELAXING WITH AN APERITIF.
YOU HEAR THAT, JACK?
HE KNOWS FANCY WORDS FOR *DRINKS*... I BET YOU WEREN'T EXPECTING HIM TO BE ***CLEVER***, WERE YOU?
YOU'RE RIGHT...
SO WHAT'S MISSING?
THE ***MURDERER***. THE ***MOTIVE***. THE USUAL THINGS.
HE'S SHARP ISN'T HE? THAT IS ***SO*** SEXY!
AND THOSE ***EYES***.
HAUNTING, DON'T YOU THINK?
OKAAAAY, SO LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND. IF IT'S MURDER, THE INSURANCE COMPANY IS GONNA PAY ME A WHOLE LOT MORE.

BEST IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE OPEN AREA -- THE KITCHEN AND STORAGE BACK THERE.
I CAN'T HAVE YOU GETTING STUCK IN ANY DOOR FRAMES.
CUTE. WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?
LIKE YOU SAY, THESE GUYS WERE SCIENTISTS. MAYBE THEY WERE KILLED FOR SECRETS OR SOME SHIT.
MAN, HOW DID THEY MAKE YOU A PRIVATE DETECTIVE ANYWAY...?
I MEAN, SURE, THEY CAN PUT YOU IN A TRENCHCOAT AND FEDORA...
BUT IT'S NOT LIKE YOU CAN SNEAK AROUND OR LOSE YOURSELF IN THE CROWD WHEN YOU'RE TAILING SOMEONE, IS IT?
I NEVER SAID I WAS A PRIVATE DETECTIVE, THERE'S NOTHING ABOUT ANY ELEPHANTMAN'S LIFE YOU COULD DESCRIBE AS PRIVATE.
THE AGENCY ONLY ASSIGNS ME TO CASES INVOLVING ANY TRANSGENICS, NO MATTER HOW TANGENTIAL.
LIKE THAT PIG UPSTAIRS.


FLASK, YOUR PRIVATE LIFE IS NONE OF MY BUSINESS. I'VE KNOWN YOU LIKE, TEN MINUTES AND ALREADY I HAVE WAY TOO MUCH INFORMATION.
SO, CHECKING OUT THE BEDROOM? NAUGHTY BOY!
WHAT DO YOU THINK WENT ON IN HERE, Hm?
PLEASE TELL ME YOU DIDN'T... COME HERE BEFORE.
I MEAN, IT'S NOT LIKE IT WOULD BE THE FIRST SECRET YOU KEPT FROM ME.
NOW, WOULD IT?
SCARLET, ENOUGH.
HAVEN'T YOU GIVEN ME ENOUGH HEART ACHE FOR ONE LIFETIME?
HEART ACHE IS FOR AMATEURS, MY LOVE... CHECK THESE OUT.
WHO'D THINK A COUPLE OF SCIENTISTS WOULD HAVE BEEN GETTING THEIR LOVE-FUN ON?
MAYBE YOU COULD HAVE HAD A LITTLE MORE IMAGINATION IN THAT AREA.
YEAH, YEAH...
IT'S ALWAYS HIDE AND SEEK WITH YOU, ISN'T IT, SWEETY?
SO WHO KILLED THESE KIDS, Hm?
WHAT'S THE STORY, DETECTIVE?
YOU HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE, HAVE YOU? Tch-tch.
ISN'T IT AMAZING WHAT RUTHLESS PEOPLE CAN GET AWAY WITH?
RUTHLESS IS DEFINITELY THE RIGHT WORD WHERE YOU'RE CONCERNED.
I'M NOT HIDING, I'M JUST PICKING UP THE PIECES.

KLK
HEH
I MAY BE A LARDASS, BUT I'M DEXTEROUS.
SKINNY DUDES THINK THEY'RE SO SMART.
RUNNING AROUND STATING THE OBVIOUS...
WHILE THE VERY THING THEY'RE LOOKING FOR IS RIGHT UNDER THEIR NOSES.

Hm.
DO YOU GUYS LIKE MOOCHING AROUND IN THE DARK?
CLK
USING A FLASHLIGHT HELPS ME FOCUS.
YOU SHOULD TRY IT.
DON'T YOU START. WHAT IS THIS -- THE LAUNDRY ROOM?
YEAH, AND I'VE GOT FRIENDS WHO LIVE IN SMALLER APARTMENTS.
BUT I SAW TRACES OF RECENT WATER SPOTTING ON THE TILE IN THE HALLWAY.
GOTTA WONDER WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DRIPPING.
HAPPENS TO ME EVERY TIME I GET A COLD ONE FROM THE FRIDGE.

COULD BE SOMEONE HELPED THEMSELF TO WHATEVER THEY HAD STORED IN HERE -- OTHER THAN MEATS AND FROZEN VEGGIES...
Hunh. YEAH... WHAT WERE THEY KEEPING IN HERE THAT FILLED UP HALF THEIR FREEZER?
WHAT WOULD THEY NEED KEPT COLD?
ICE CREAM?
TAKES UP ABOUT THAT MUCH SPACE IN MY FREEZER.
WHAT'S THAT DOWN THERE?
TAPE...? WITH SOME KIND OF MARKING?
HOLD ON A SECOND... LET ME GET THAT...
Scanning...
AND LOOK...

LOOKS LIKE OUR FRIENDS WERE EXPECTING TROUBLE.
MAN ALIVE! HOW DID THE DRONES MISS THIS?
I MEAN, WHAT ARE COPS GETTING PAID FOR THESE DAYS ANYWAY?
DON'T KNOCK 'EM. LIKE YOU SAY, IF THEY DID A BETTER JOB, WE WOULDN'T HAVE ONE.
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT. COUPLE OF MONTHS AGO, THIEVES TURNED MY PLACE OVER.
L.A.P.D SENT OVER A DETECTIVE TWO WEEKS LATER AND HE ASKED ME IF I HAD ANY LEADS.
AND DID YOU?
FLASK, YOU'RE AS BAD AS THEY ARE...
AND I BET I'M PAYING YOUR SALARY OUT OF MY TAXES TOO.
SO THESE KIDS HAD SOMETHING HERE WORTH GETTING KILLED FOR.
AND NOT JUST SECRETS.

DON'T YOU GET A FRISSON OF FEAR STANDING NEXT TO HIM? A TIGHTENING IN THE STOMACH? HE'S AN UGLY BRUTE, BUT KIND OF BEAUTIFUL TOO.
HE'S A MISSHAPEN MONSTROSITY -- IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN?
HE'S STILL A MAN. HIS BLOOD JUST AS RED AS YOURS.
HE HAS A HEART OF MUSCLE AND SINEW.
NICE BUTT TOO.
SCRUNCH
JUST MY TYPE.
AREN'T THEY ALL?
Oh, LIKE YOU CAN TALK.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
HEY, NOT A GOOD IDEA TO EAT POSSIBLE EVIDENCE, FARRELL...
I'LL SEE YOU BACK AT YOUR PLACE TONIGHT, HAVE FUN DETECTING WITH THE HUNK, HERE...

DO ALL SCIENTISTS LIVE IN PLUSH DIGS LIKE THIS?
CREEEAKK
Er, FLASK, I DON'T THINK THAT BALCONY IS BUILT TO--
WOAAAAAH!
--TAKE YOUR...
...WEIGHT...
KR UNCH
HELL'S SQUAKKING TEETH!
DON'T MOVE OR YOU'LL HAVE THAT ONE DOWN TOO!

LATER THAT NIGHT
TOOK ME AN HOUR TO GET THAT MUNT OFF THE BALCONY.

BUT YOU WERE RIGHT. ALL MUSCLE. BARELY A SCRATCH ON HIM.
Scan processed.
AND LOOK AT THAT. THE MARKING ON THE TAPE.
MAPPO.
MORE TROUBLE?
IT'S LIKE IT COMES LOOKING FOR YOU.
YEAH.
GUESS I'M STUCK WITH FLASK ON THIS ONE.
WORK, WORK, WORK. DON'T YOU EVER STOP?
THAT WAS ALWAYS THE PROBLEM, WASN'T IT?
IT WAS YOUR PROBLEM, SCARLET -- YOUR PROBLEM WITH ME.

WELL, MAYBE IF YOU'D BEEN THINKING MORE ABOUT US AND LESS ABOUT YOUR WORK...
OR THOSE GIRLS YOU LIKED TO FLIRT WITH.
REALLY? THIS AGAIN?
A Guy.
A Girl.
WELL, WOULDN'T YOU BE HAPPIER IF I WAS STILL HERE TO KISS YOU AT NIGHT...?
OF COURSE I DO, BABE...
I--I THINK ABOUT YOU... ALL THE TIME.
HOW CAN I EVER FORGET YOU?
I LOVE YOU.
A Gun.
Blood.
Oh, HONEY... THAT'S SO SWEET...
It should be simple.
BUT, Y'KNOW, IF YOU WERE SO MUCH IN LOVE WITH ME...

It never is.
...THEN YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T HAVE KILLED ME.

#2
BOO COOK cover art

"*PLEASURE* AND *PAIN* HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH *HEAVEN* OR *HELL*.

"THIS STORE WHICH MEN AND WOMEN SET ON PLEASURE AND PAIN IS THE MARK OF *THE BEAST* UPON THEM!

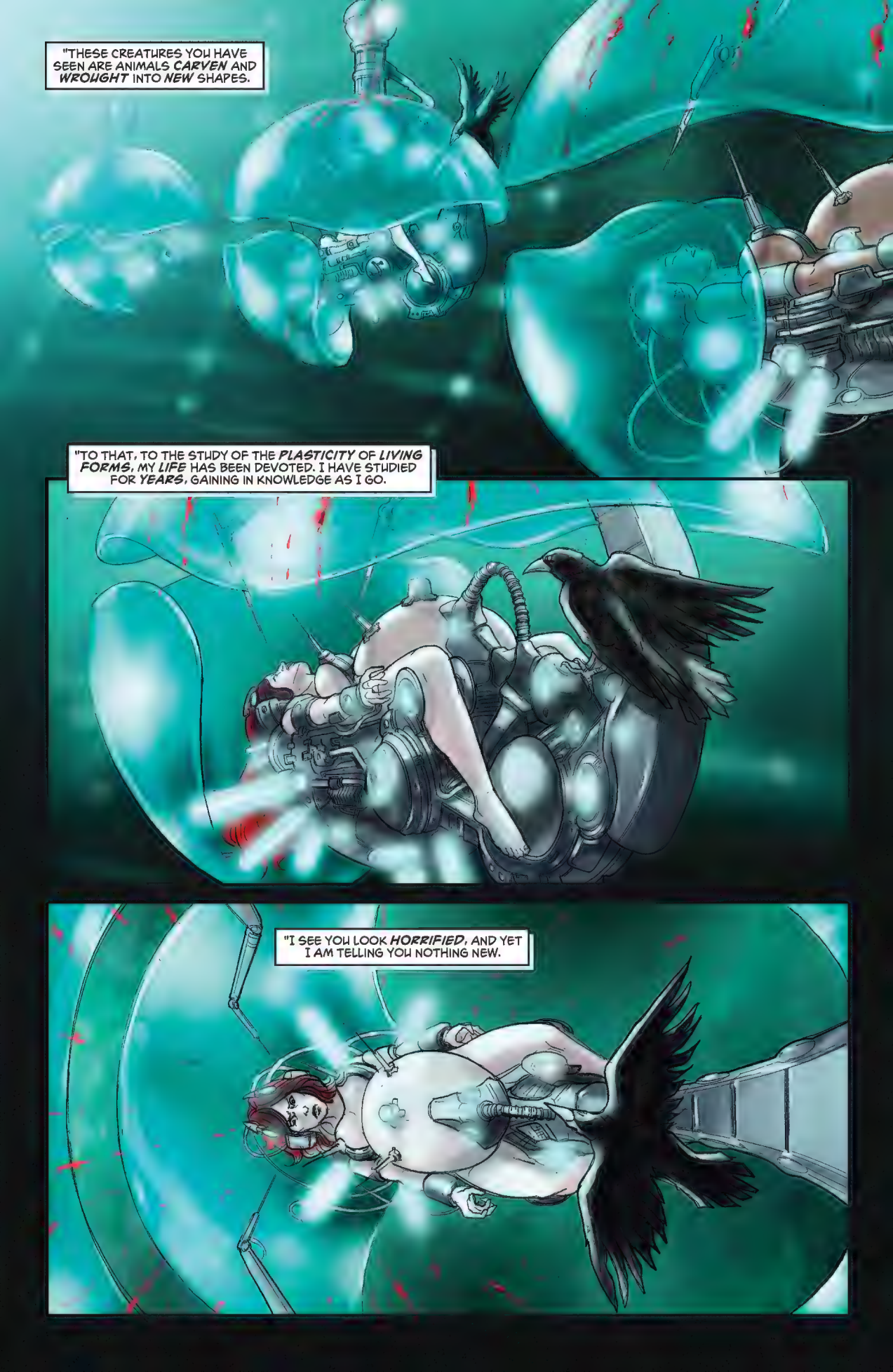
Richard Starkings
Words

Axel Medellin
Pictures

House of Pain

"THESE CREATURES OF MINE SEEMED STRANGE AND UNCANNY TO YOU AS SOON AS YOU BEGAN TO OBSERVE THEM; BUT TO ME, JUST AFTER I MAKE THEM, THEY SEEM TO BE INDISPUTABLY HUMAN BEINGS.
"IT IS AFTERWARDS, AS I OBSERVE THEM, THAT THE PERSUASION FADES. FIRST ONE ANIMAL TRAIT, THEN ANOTHER, CREEPS TO THE SURFACE AND STARES OUT AT ME. BUT I WILL CONQUER YET!

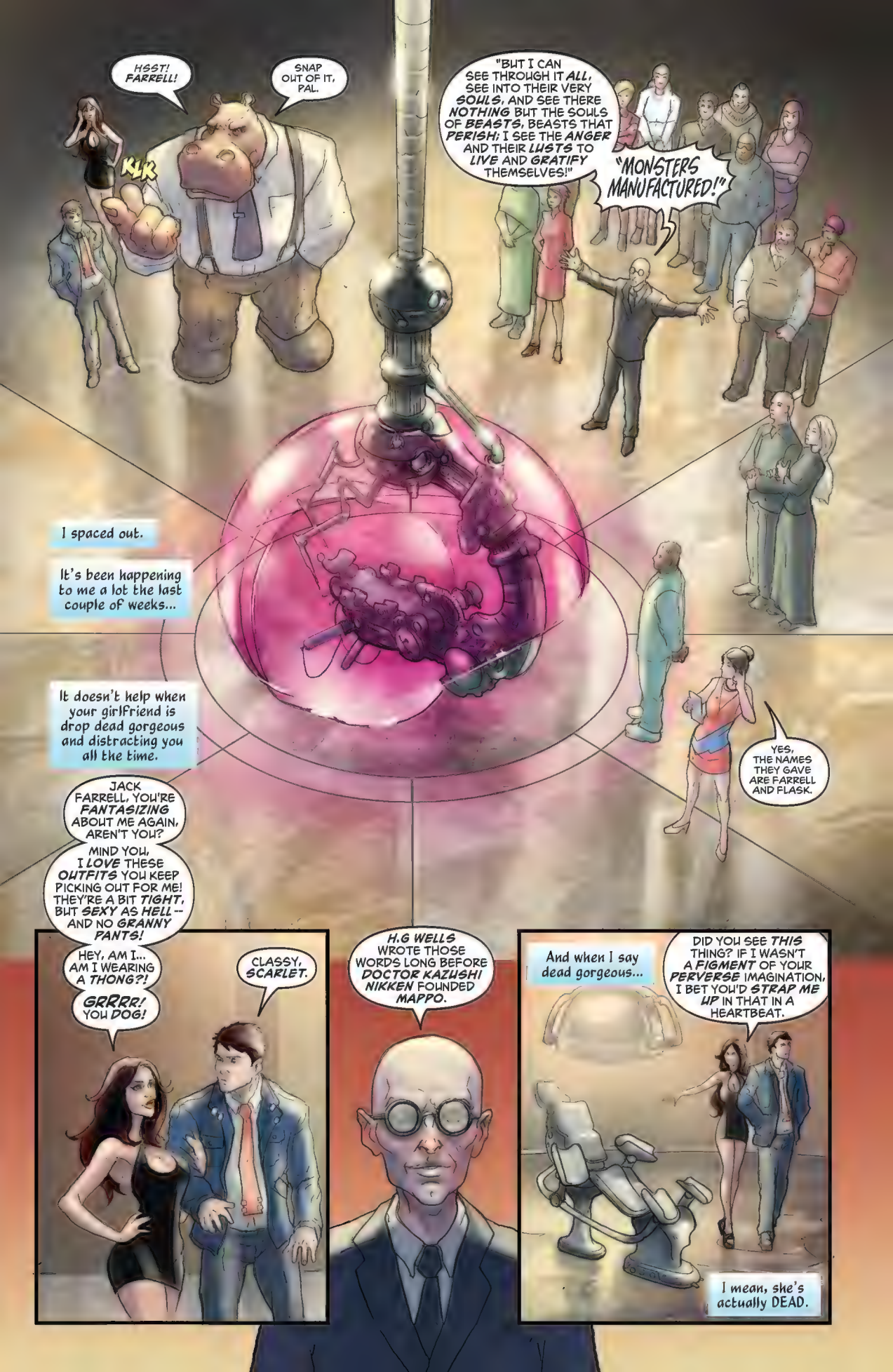
"EACH TIME I DIP A LIVING CREATURE INTO THE BATH OF BURNING PAIN, I SAY, 'THIS TIME I WILL BURN OUT ALL THE ANIMAL; THIS TIME I WILL MAKE A RATIONAL CREATURE OF MY OWN!'

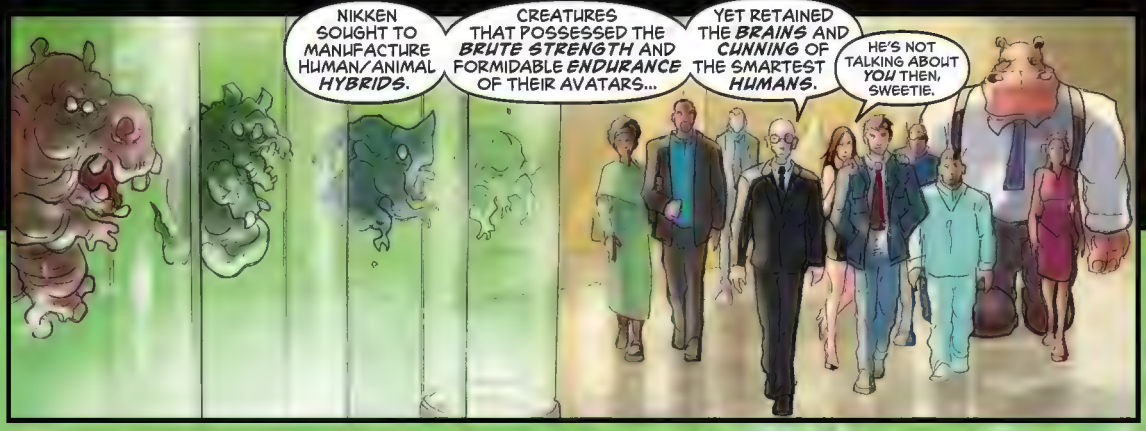

"THESE CREATURES YOU HAVE SEEN ARE ANIMALS *CARVEN* AND *WROUGHT* INTO *NEW* SHAPES.
"TO THAT, TO THE STUDY OF THE *PLASTICITY* OF *LIVING FORMS*, MY *LIFE* HAS BEEN DEVOTED. I HAVE STUDIED FOR *YEARS*, GAINING IN KNOWLEDGE AS I GO.
"I SEE YOU LOOK *HORRIFIED*, AND YET I AM TELLING YOU NOTHING NEW.

FARRELL...?
"IT IS A POSSIBLE THING TO TRANSPLANT *TISSUE* FROM ONE PART OF AN ANIMAL TO ANOTHER, OR FROM ONE ANIMAL *TO* ANOTHER;
JACK...? HELP ME...
"TO *ALTER* ITS CHEMICAL REACTIONS AND METHODS OF *GROWTH;*
FARRELL!
"TO MODIFY THE *ARTICULATIONS* OF ITS *LIMBS;*
SQUUTCH
"AND, INDEED, TO CHANGE IT IN ITS MOST *INTIMATE* STRUCTURE..."
AHHHH PLEASE... NO... NO--

MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE LOS ANGELES · 2260

FARRELL...?

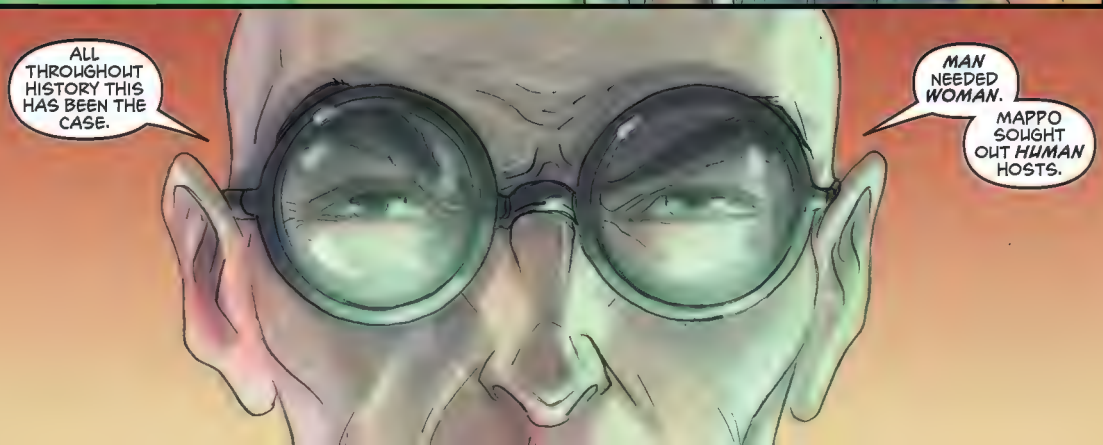

HSST! FARRELL!
SNAP OUT OF IT, PAL.
KLK
"BUT I CAN SEE THROUGH IT ALL, SEE INTO THEIR VERY SOULS, AND SEE THERE NOTHING BUT THE SOULS OF BEASTS, BEASTS THAT PERISH; I SEE THE ANGER AND THEIR LUSTS TO LIVE AND GRATIFY THEMSELVES!"
"MONSTERS MANUFACTURED!"
I spaced out.
It's been happening to me a lot the last couple of weeks...
It doesn't help when your girlfriend is drop dead gorgeous and distracting you all the time.
YES, THE NAMES THEY GAVE ARE FARRELL AND FLASK.
JACK FARRELL, YOU'RE FANTASIZING ABOUT ME AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?
MIND YOU, I LOVE THESE OUTFITS YOU KEEP PICKING OUT FOR ME! THEY'RE A BIT TIGHT, BUT SEXY AS HELL -- AND NO GRANNY PANTS!
HEY, AM I... AM I WEARING A THONG?!
GRRRR! YOU DOG!
CLASSY, SCARLET.
H.G WELLS WROTE THOSE WORDS LONG BEFORE DOCTOR KAZUSHI NIKKEN FOUNDED MAPPO.
And when I say dead gorgeous...
DID YOU SEE THIS THING? IF I WASN'T A FIGMENT OF YOUR PERVERSE IMAGINATION, I BET YOU'D STRAP ME UP IN THAT IN A HEARTBEAT.
I mean, she's actually DEAD.


NIKKEN SOUGHT TO MANUFACTURE HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS.
CREATURES THAT POSSESSED THE BRUTE STRENGTH AND FORMIDABLE ENDURANCE OF THEIR AVATARS...
YET RETAINED THE BRAINS AND CUNNING OF THE SMARTEST HUMANS.
HE'S NOT TALKING ABOUT YOU THEN, SWEETIE.

"SPERM -- DEVELOPED FROM DNA SAMPLINGS OF EACH ANIMAL -- WERE INJECTED INTO GENETICALLY PURIFIED HUMAN EGGS, THEN MAPPO ATTEMPTED TO GROW THESE HYBRIDS IN VITRO, IN MACHINES THAT SUBSTITUTED FOR A MOTHER'S WOMB.

"THE RESULTS WERE, AS YOU SEE, HORRIFIC.

MAPPO'S MACHINES COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE HUMAN BRAIN.
THE MOST ESSENTIAL ORGAN FOR REGULATING THE DNA AND CHARACTER OF THE HYBRIDS.
Ohhhhh! ESSENTIAL ORGANS!
"NICE BRAINS," SAID NO MAN TO ME EVER.
MAPPO SOUNDS LIKE EVERY OTHER GUY, YOU JUST WANT ONE THING...



MUCH LIKE THE JANJAWEED, CENTURIES AGO, MAPPO SENT MEN INTO THE VILLAGES OF NORTH AFRICA TO FIND WOMEN WHO COULD BE IMPREGNATED.
THE VIKINGS DID IT, THE ROMANS DID IT... THE FRENCH, THE DUTCH. SO DID THE EUROPEAN SETTLERS WHEN THEY PUT THEIR SEED IN NATIVE AMERICANS OR BLACK SLAVES.
NO DOUBT NIKKEN PERSUADED HIS COLLEAGUES THAT HIS "ACQUISITIONS" WERE ESSENTIAL TO SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS.
BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE WORD FOR IT. RAPE.
LOOK AT THE SIZE OF HIS GUN!
THIS IS NOT THE TIME, SCARLET!
There are two scientists dead as well... MURDERED.
Not MAPPO scientists...
But something my... partner found at the crime scene has brought us here.
WHEN THE VAN'S A-ROCKIN', DON'T COME A-KNOCKIN', RIGHT, JACK?
Every time I think it's hard enough to listen to SCARLET...
I wonder what goes on in HIS mind in a place like this...
It's his JOB to investigate crimes relating to his kind.
IN THIS WAY, NIKKEN'S BASTARD CHILDREN WERE CREATED.
YOU NEVER KNEW YOUR MOTHER'S LOVE, DID YOU, JACK?
NO WONDER YOU ALWAYS TREATED ME LIKE SHIT.
That doesn't mean it's EASY for him.
MAPPO WANTED THEIR HUMANITY.
SO THEY TOOK IT!
In that sense, we're very much alike.

STOP AND THINK FOR A MOMENT ABOUT THE CULTURE IN WHICH YOU LIVE... THE KIND OF THOUGHT PROCESS THAT LEADS TO HOLOCAUSTS OF THIS KIND.
WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO PROTECT THE QUALITY OF YOUR LIFE? WHAT WOULD YOUR GOVERNMENT DO TO ENSURE YOUR SURVIVAL?
NO ONE WANTS TO GO HUNGRY, SO WE MUTATE CROPS, EXTERMINATE INSECTS AND FORCEFEED LIVESTOCK.
YOUR GOVERNMENT PROTECTS YOU FROM THESE GRIM REALITIES AND YOU WILLINGLY TURN A BLIND EYE.
YOU DO THE SAME WHEN WARS ARE FOUGHT TO PROTECT YOUR WAY OF LIFE. YOU ONLY START TO QUESTION WHY WARS ARE FOUGHT WHEN THE MEDIA SHOW YOU DISABLED VETERANS AND COFFINS.
SO, WHAT IF YOU WERE TOLD THAT THE HUMAN ELEMENT COULD BE REMOVED FROM THE BATTLEFIELD ENTIRELY?
WHAT IF ANIMALS COULD BE GENETICALLY MODIFIED TO FIGHT IN YOUR PLACE?
THESE HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS COULD EVEN BE GENETICALLY DESIGNED TO CONVERT FAT INTO ENERGY MORE EFFICIENTLY SO THEY COULD GO DAYS WITHOUT EATING IN THE WARZONE.
THEY COULD EVEN REGROW LIMBS BLOWN OFF IN BATTLE.
AND WHAT IF YOU WERE CONVINCED THAT THESE CREATURES WOULDN'T SUFFER? TRAUMATIC MEMORIES COULD BE ERASED... OR EVEN REPLACED WITH KINDER, GENTLER THOUGHTS.
IT SUDDENLY SOUNDS VERY APPEALING, DOESN'T IT?
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU'RE TOLD THAT HIGHLY QUALIFIED SCIENTISTS ARE ALREADY DEVELOPING THESE SOLDIERS.
AND ALL IT WOULD COST IS THE LIVES OF A FEW THOUSAND AFRICAN WOMEN WHO YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF ANYWAY.
A HIDDEN COST, OF COURSE.
OR, AS WELLS WOULD HAVE SAID...
PSSSST! JACK!
HEY, JACK, CHECK ME OUT!

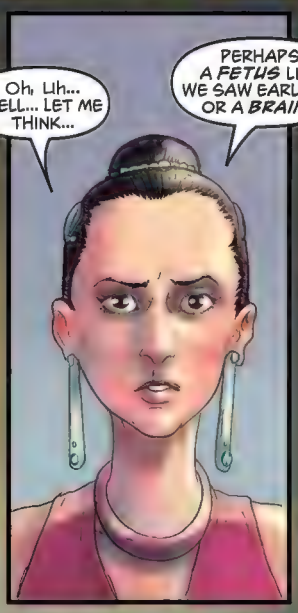
..."A TRAVESTY OF HUMANITY!"
THIS BODY WAS DISCARDED BEFORE THE FETUS REACHED FULL TERM.
IS THAT HOW YOU PICTURED ME WHEN I TOLD YOU MY GOOD NEWS, JACK?
HEY, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PREGNANT WOMAN AND A LIGHT BULB?
YOU CAN UNSCREW A LIGHT BULB!
YOU ARE SO SICK, SCARLET.
SOME CALL IT COMMERCE, SOME CALL IT GROWING SLAVES.
MAPPO EVEN MARKED THE HYBRIDS... BRANDING THEIR CREATIONS AS PROPERTY, JUST AS AFRICAN MEN AND WOMEN WERE BRANDED IN AMERICA HUNDREDS OF YEARS AGO.
UH, I HAVE A QUESTION.

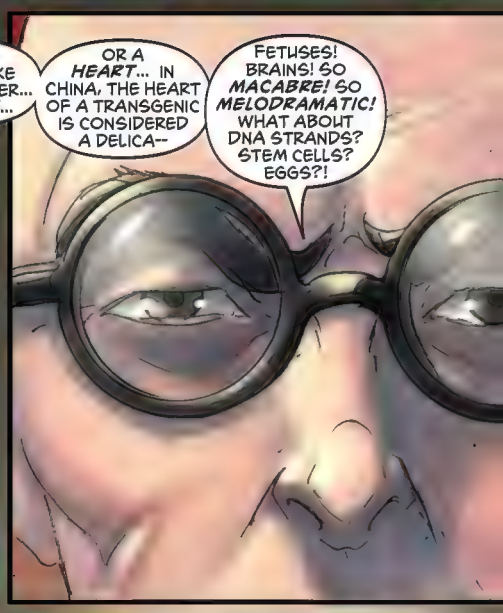
SEE, WE FOUND THIS. A SLIVER OF TAPE. WITH THE MAPPO LOGO. IT WAS IN A FREEZER.

MAY I?
Hm. INTERESTING.

IT MUST HAVE FALLEN OFF A CONTAINER OF SOME KIND...
COULD HAVE BEEN... YEA BIG...

LYDIA. YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH ALL THE EXHIBITS HERE NOW,
WHAT WOULD BE YOUR GUESS AS TO A MAPPO ARTIFACT THAT MIGHT BE KEPT IN A FREEZER?


Oh, Uh... WELL... LET ME THINK...
PERHAPS A FETUS LIKE WE SAW EARLIER... OR A BRAIN...


OR A HEART... IN CHINA, THE HEART OF A TRANSGENIC IS CONSIDERED A DELICA--
FETUSES! BRAINS! SO MACABRE! SO MELODRAMATIC! WHAT ABOUT DNA STRANDS? STEM CELLS? EGGS?!

EGGS?
YES. FERTILIZED EGGS, OF COURSE.

MAPPO PRODUCED THOUSANDS OF THEM, BELIEVING THE WAR WOULD NEVER END AND DEMAND FOR THEIR PRODUCT WOULD CONTINUE.
FLASKS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO TURN UP ON THE BLACK MARKET.

NOW, PLEASE, LET US CONTINUE.
EGGS?
YOU CAN'T MAKE OMELETTES WITHOUT THEM, SWEETIE.
THEY KNOW SOMETHING! WHAT DO I DO?

FLASK, Y'THINK THOSE TWO SCIENTISTS WERE MURDERED OVER NOTHING MORE THAN A COOLER FULL OF EGGS?
MAKES SENSE...
NIKKEN WASN'T THE FIRST MADMAN INTENT ON CREATING A WHOLE RACE OF SUPERMEN.
WHY WOULDN'T THERE BE ANOTHER MEGALOMANIAC LOOKING TO PICK UP WHERE HE LEFT OFF?
SO YOU BRED A SUPER SOLDIER, RAISED HIM... BRAINWASHED HIM... HOW THEN DO YOU TRAIN HIM?
DO YOU PIT HIM AGAINST HIS OWN?
NO, NOT AT TWENTY MILLION APIECE.
YOU USE A ROBOT LIKE THIS ONE FOUND IN THE MAPPO COMPOUND BY THE U.N.
LOOKS LIKE A LOVE MACHINE TO ME, JACK! SET IT ON VIBRATE AND LET ME AT IT!
IT WOULDN'T STAND A CHANCE!
THIS ONE WAS STILL OPERATIONAL.
DESIGNED TO PUSH THE ELEPHANTMEN TO THEIR VERY LIMITS.
YEAH, THEY DID THAT ALL RIGHT...

PLEASE FORGIVE ME, MISTER FLASK, IF THIS BRINGS BACK ANY BAD MEMORIES...
JUST A MUSEUM PIECE...
KTK
SNKT
TP TP TP
ZZMMMM
EQUALIZER ACTIVATED... EVALUATION BEGINS.
THMMMMMM

THOOM!
UHH
HELL'S SQUAKKIN' TEETH!
WHAT THE--?
TP TP
ASSESSMENT HAS BEGUN. YOU HAVE FIVE MINUTES TO PROVE YOURSELF COMBAT-READY. ENGAGE.

Oh YEAH...?
"COMBAT READY?"
I'VE BEEN IN COMBAT!
WAKT
BUT YOU...
WONKT
YOU'RE JUST A TALKING PUNCHBAG!
CHARGING...
ZZMMMM

FOOM!

KRSH

KRKSH

KRTISH

UH...

SO IT'S LIKE THAT, IS IT?

THIS IS *OUTRAGEOUS!* THESE ARTIFACTS ARE IRREPLACEABLE! *PRICELESS!*

THE ROBOT MUST HAVE BEEN ACTIVATED BY THE PRESENCE OF A TRANSGENIC!

MISTER FLASK, *DISENGAGE AT ONCE!*

TP TP

DUDE! IT'S YOUR *ROBOT*, CAN'T YOU TURN THAT THING OFF?

ADMIT IT, YOU LOVE TO PULL YOUR *WEAPON* OUT!

EVALUATION IS IN PROCESS. IMPEDIMENTS WILL BE ELIMINATED.

Ah, OKAY...

THE PROSPECT OF *DEATH* REALLY FOCUSES THE MIND, DOESN'T IT, JACK?

I'M NOT *DONE* WITH YOU, PAL!

BLINDSIDED. YOU HAVE THREE MINUTES...

FTAM FTAM

PTANK

PTINK

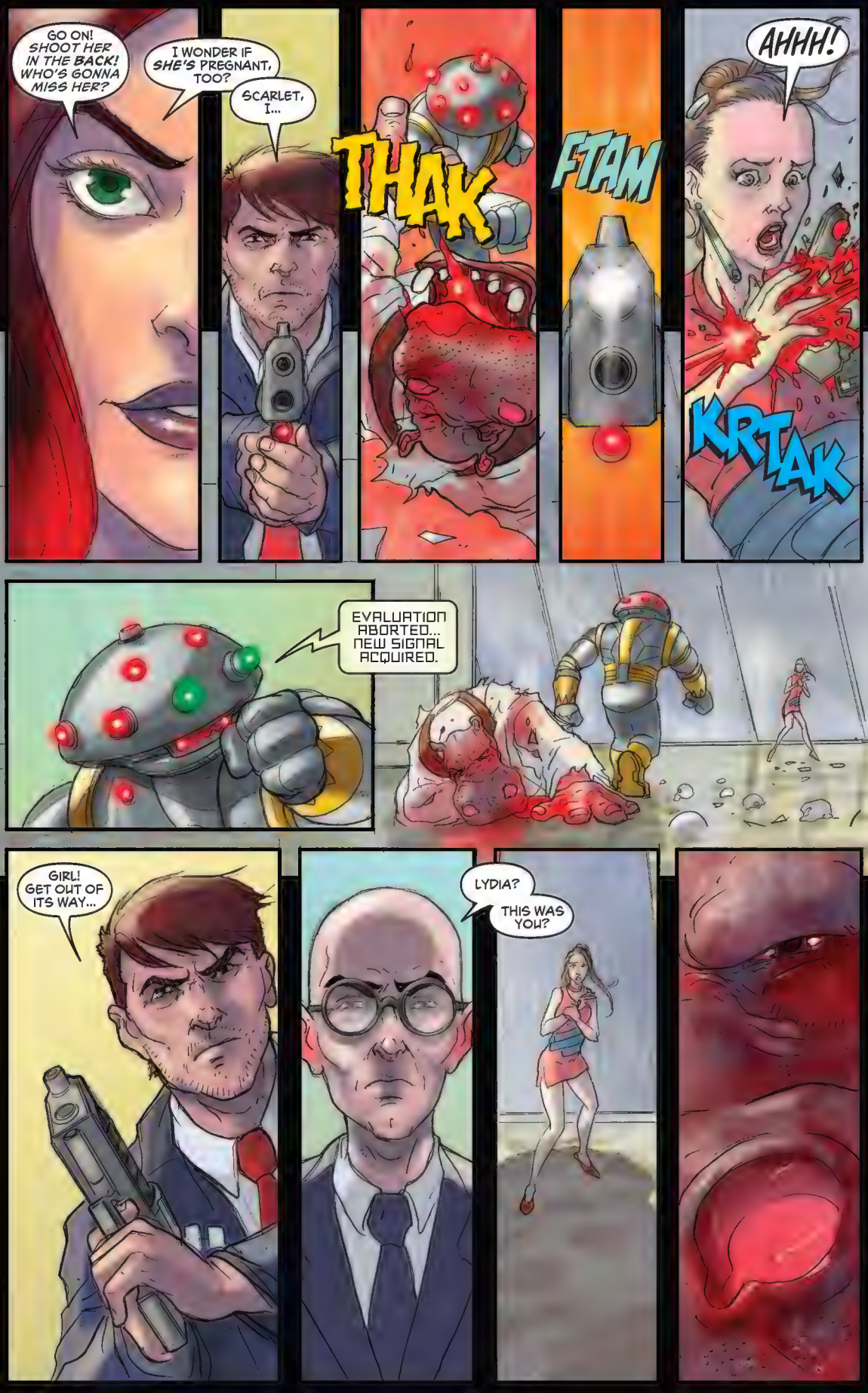
IF YOU REALLY WANT TO *SHOOT* SOMEONE, BIG BOY, WHY NOT A *WOMAN?*

IT'S NOT LIKE YOU HAVEN'T HAD *PRACTICE*, AND COME ON, *LOOK* AT HER... SHE'S *OBVIOUSLY* UP TO NO GOOD...

JACK... EVERYONE ELSE HAS MADE A *RUN* FOR IT...

TP TP TP

WHAK


GO ON! SHOOT HER IN THE BACK! WHO'S GONNA MISS HER?
I WONDER IF SHE'S PREGNANT, TOO?
SCARLET, I...
THAK
FTAM
AHHH!
KRTAK
EVALUATION ABORTED... NEW SIGNAL ACQUIRED.
GIRL! GET OUT OF ITS WAY...
LYDIA?
THIS WAS YOU?

IMPEDIMENTS WILL BE ELIMINATED.
KRTESSSH
FOOM!
THAT'S ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE.
POWERING DOWN...
ZZMMMM
NONSENSE! ARE YOU KIDDING? YOUR ASSISTANT WAS JUST BLOWN OUT OF THE WINDOW.
TP TP
YES. THE AUTHORITIES WILL BE NOTIFIED.
ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST, Eh, JACK?
YOU MUST FEEL PROUD.
SCARLET... I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE PREGNANT.
NOT WHEN I SHOT YOU.
HOW SWEET OF YOU TO SAY!
IF I WAS STILL ALIVE, I'D FEEL SO MUCH BETTER!
THINK ABOUT THIS THEN... THERE ARE ONLY TWO REASONS YOU NEED EGGS...
MAKING BREAKFAST OR MAKING BABIES...

"...I THINK EVERY MOTHER KNOWS THAT, DON'T THEY, JACK?
PERHAPS I SHOULD TAKE THAT, THANK YOU.
MAYBE *YOU* SHOULD BE THINKING ABOUT HOW TO EXPLAIN ALL THIS TO YOUR SUPERIORS.
YOU THINK *I* HAVE SOMETHING TO EXPLAIN?
SEEMS TO ME LIKE YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING OF THE MARK OF *MAPPO* ON YOU, TOO.
I'VE READ WELLS, PAL.
HI, QUI HOMINES NON SUNT, ANIMALIA NON SUNT...
ISTI, QUI EOS CREAVERUNT, SUNT ANIMALIA.
FLASK! DUDE, YOU OKAY?
I'LL LIVE.
Fertilized transgenic eggs.
My dead girlfriend.
WHAT THE HECK WAS HE SAYING? WAS THAT *LATIN?*
YES. "THESE PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT HUMAN BEINGS ARE NOT THE ANIMALS...
"THE MEN WHO CREATED THEM ARE THE ANIMALS."
YOU *BET!*
Elephantmen quoting H.G. Wells, speaking LATIN.
Can this case get ANY weirder...?

#3
BOO COOK cover art

Two NEX GEN scientists are dead, a young couple, MURDERED in their own home.

NEX GEN's insurance company hire me to look into swindlers, scams and extortion attempts. Ever since the human genome was mapped and patented, the source codes of life have been closely guarded secrets.

The military/industrial complex used to trade WEAPONS with foreign powers. Now they trade BIOLOGICAL SECRETS. Same thing.

And whenever the military are involved, you just KNOW people are going to get KILLED.

Or thrown out of windows.

Richard Starkings
Words

Axel Medellin
Pictures

The Hand That Wounds

MS FOX... LYDIA?
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
LIKE... ALL THE BONES IN MY BODY ARE BROKEN. WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME? I WAS ON THE TOUR.
WITH THE TRANSGENIC YOU TRIED TO KILL.
Oh, FARRELL THE DETECTIVE? YOU'RE PRETTY. IT'LL BE A SHAME WHEN YOU'RE DEAD.
WELL, BE SURE TO GREET ME IN HELL... 'CAUSE THIS MACHINE AND A BUNCHA PAINKILLERS ARE THE ONLY THINGS KEEPING YOU ALIVE.
HEY, WHILE WE'RE ON THAT SUBJECT, WHO'S PAYING YOUR HOSPITAL EXPENSES?
DON'T TELL ME IT'S THE SAME PEOPLE WHO HAD YOU BLASTED OUT THE FOURTEENTH FLOOR OF THE MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE.
NOT VERY TOLERANT OF THEM, WAS IT?
QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM ME?
I DON'T HAVE ANSWERS FOR YOU.
WELL, I THINK MAYBE YOU KNOW WHO WOULD KILL A COUPLA FOOLHARDY GENETIC SCIENTISTS...
...FOR A FLASK OF MAPPO'S FERTILIZED TRANSGENIC EGGS.
LET'S START THERE.
IDIOT.
THIS ISN'T ABOUT TWO NOBODIES KILLED TRYING TO SELL MAPPO MEMORABILIA ON THE BLACK MARKET.
HAVE YOU THOUGHT THIS THROUGH?

THINKING THINGS THROUGH MAY NOT BE MY NEW PARTNER'S STRONG POINT.
HE'S ONLY HUMAN, AFTER ALL.
YOU SAY THAT LIKE IT'S A BAD THING.
DIDN'T GRUENWALD GIVE YOU THE DAY OFF?
LOOK AT THE TWO OF YOU.
A CHEAP GUMSHOE AND A MUNT ON THE GOVERNMENT PAYROLL FOR SHOW.
THEY'RE JUST LETTING YOU GO THROUGH THE MOTIONS, YOU KNOW.
NICE TO SEE YOU, TOO. HOW'S THE RUPTURED SPLEEN?
THE INTERNAL BLEEDING?
YOU HAVE BONE SPLINTERS IN BOTH LUNGS, RIGHT?
NOW, YOU WANNA TELL ME WHY YOU SICCED THAT ROBOT ON ME?
BECAUSE IT WAS THERE.
BECAUSE I HAD A JOB TO DO.
BECAUSE, IF IT HAD KILLED YOU, THE STORY WOULD BE ABOUT HIP FLASK, NOT A FLASK OF MAPPO EGGS.
NOT ABOUT A BUNCH OF MISSING WOMEN.
WHAT?
WHAT MISSING WOMEN?
Hmmp
PLEASE, I'M TIRED...
LET ME REST...

DON'T LET HER THROW YOU OFF THE TRAIL...
SHE'S MORE THAN JUST AN EAGER DOCENT.
COFFEE?
I DON'T THINK YOU'LL FIND A CUP I CAN *PICK UP* HERE.
Ah...
Oh.
YOU WANT THE *JUG?*
WE'RE INVESTIGATING A DOUBLE *MURDER*. SHE WOULDN'T HAVE TRIED TO *KILL* ME IF WE WEREN'T *ONTO* SOMETHING.
IT'S JUST NOT ADDING UP. WHO WAS LYDIA *WORKING* FOR...?
I'M GOOD, THANKS. YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU, THAT THE MORE WE DIG, THE MORE *DIRT* WE'RE GONNA FIND?
YOU THINK THERE ARE STILL *MAPPO* OPERATIVES OUT THERE?
I GUESS WALKING THROUGH THAT EXHIBIT MUST HAVE BROUGHT BACK SOME *TOUGH* MEMORIES...

MY MEMORIES AIN'T WHAT THEY USED TO BE...
YOU KNOW WHAT I'VE LEARNED... YOU CAN'T EVEN TRUST YOUR OWN THOUGHTS.
SOME, I CHERISH...
OTHERS, WELL....
I'M NOT ALWAYS SURE IF THE THINGS I REMEMBER REALLY HAPPENED...
"THEY DIDN'T JUST BURN THE MAPPO LOGO ONTO OUR BACKS...
THEY BURNED IT INTO OUR BRAINS...
MONITORED OUR EVERY WHIM, EVERY IMPULSE AND ACTION.
"EVEN TODAY THERE ARE NANOBOTS IN MY BLOODSTREAM, DESIGNED TO RECORD EVERY MOVEMENT, EVERY EMOTION...
YOU SPOKE SOME FANCY LATIN SHIT TO THE CURATOR... DID THE NANOBOTS MAKE YOU SMART AS WELL?
I READ MYSELF SMART, PAL. WHAT ELSE AM I GONNA DO?
LATIN, HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY.
"THE ONLY REAL DANGER IS MAN HIMSELF. "HE SHOULD BE STUDIED BECAUSE HE IS THE ORIGIN OF ALL COMING EVIL."
JUNG.
KNOW THINE ENEMY. CUTE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS MISSING WOMEN BUSINESS?
IT REMINDS ME...
WHO WERE YOU TALKING TO?
AT THE MUSEUM?
I WAS TALKING OUT LOUD?
TO SCARLET?
Scarlet. How do I explain SCARLET?

How do I explain how we met...?

I'M SCARLET.

FARRELL.

In some ways it was like a Fairy Tale.

PLEASED TO MEET YOU.

LIKEWISE.

WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
I remember we were in a big hall.
In evening dress. Just the two of us.
I'M LOOKING FOR THE LOVE OF MY LIFE.
No, that's not right... it was a big dinner party... City Hall. All councilmen and police chiefs...
Scarlet was with a bunch of news anchors who work for THE SLATE.
YOU DON'T MESS AROUND, DO YOU?
I LIKE TO GET FROM A TO B.
But, at her suggestion, we left...

In what seemed like just a moment, we were at my apartment...
It was Paradise...
And then, out of the blue...
PLEASE DON'T EVER HURT ME...

It was as if she knew.

As only one who has been hurt many times before CAN know.
I can't tell Flask any of this.
Not after what I did.
So I tell him a bullshit story about not being able to get over her. About seeing her everywhere.
HALLUCINATING.
SCARLET? THAT'S A BIT FOREBODING, ISN'T IT?
WHERE DO YOU SEE HER?
ANYWHERE I GO... AT THE CRIME SCENE.
AT THE MUSEUM. IN MY APARTMENT.
I'M SURPRISED SHE HASN'T TURNED UP HERE TODAY YET.
I should have just turned and walked away.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO KNOW.
I'VE FOUND SOMEONE ELSE, JACK.
I'VE MOVED ON.
Left her there. Got on with my life.
But the thought of her in the arms of another man...
Some young punk...
...or some old fart...

IT'S BEEN MONTHS SINCE WE WERE TOGETHER...
BUT SCARLET STILL... HAUNTS ME.
I'M SORRY, FLASK, I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND.
NO, I GET IT.
I FEEL THAT WAY ABOUT SAHARA.
MOST ELEPHANTMEN DO.
SHE WALKED INTO OUR LIVES AND ENCHANTED US.
CAPTIVATED US. WE'D DO ANYTHING FOR HER...
"OF COURSE, SHE WAS CAPTIVATED BY OBADIAH HORN... HE'S THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MUNT OF US ALL...
PERHAPS HE BECAME SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE OF HER...
FLASK...
QUIET...
HUNH?

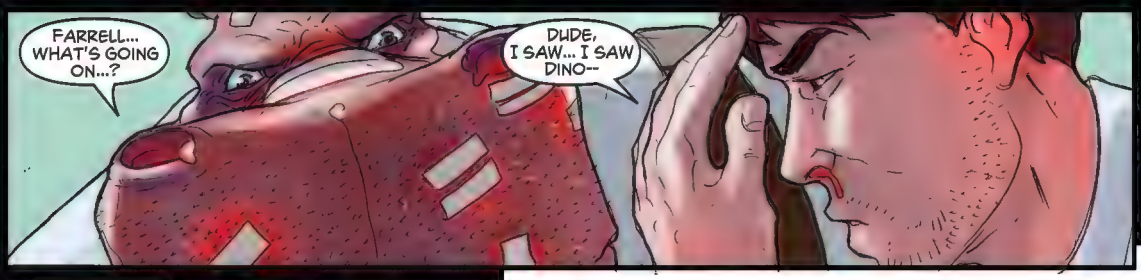
WHOA...
JACK!
SKRAWK

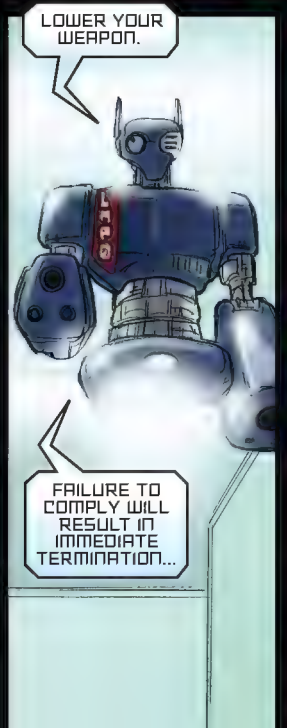
FTAM FTAM
SCARLET! GET OUT OF THE WAY!
SPTCH SPTCH
SNRK
FARRELL! WHAT IN THE NAME OF THE GOOD MUD?!
FTAM
FTAM
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?!
GET BACK! CALL THE COPS!
FTAM FTAM
HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?
DON'T WORRY, BIG GUY...
HE'S JUST CHASING AWAY MY OTHER BOYFRIENDS.
SPT SPTCH
KRAK!

KRKT SKRRR
FLASK?
A LITTLE HELP HERE, BUD...
PUT THE GUN DOWN, PAL...
THERE'S NO THREAT HERE...
SKRKK
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU DON'T SEE THE --
THE... UH... THE RAPTORS.
HUH. WHEN I SAY THAT OUT LOUD...
SKRAAK!

THEY CAN'T BE--

--REAL?
YOU ALWAYS KNEW HOW TO GET MY PULSE POUNDING, DIDN'T YOU, JACK?
GRRRR!


FARRELL... WHAT'S GOING ON...?
DUDE, I SAW... I SAW DINO--


LOWER YOUR WEAPON.
FAILURE TO COMPLY WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE TERMINATION...

WHAT? NO... I...

WHOAH... NO ONE NEEDS TO GET HURT HERE...
FARRELL? DO AS THE DROID SAYS, PAL...
NEVER ONE DULL MOMENT WITH YOU BOYS, Eh, JACK?
ALWAYS LIFE OR DEATH!

THE TWO OF YOU ARE LEAVING QUITE A TRAIL THIS EVENING...
CHIEF HOMSI?
COMMISSIONER HOMSI, FARRELL, KEEP UP. CARE TO EXPLAIN TO ME WHY YOU'VE BEEN DISCHARGING YOUR FIREARM IN A HOSPITAL?
I'M HOPING YOU DON'T HAVE A GOOD EXPLANATION BUT I'LL HEAR ONE IF YOU HAVE IT.
I... Uh... I--
HIS GUN DISCHARGED INVOLUNTARILY... FARRELL WAS DOING HIS BEST TO DISARM IT WITHOUT CAUSING ANY HARM.
LOOKS LIKE YOU MADE A FRIEND, JACK. SOMEONE NEW TO LIE FOR YOU.
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU. YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO SLEEP WITH HIM!
WHAT THE--?
ARE YOU TELLING ME THAT JACK'S WEAPON MALFUNCTIONED HERE AND AT THE MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE?
BECAUSE MAYBE THEY PUT UP WITH THAT CRAP, BUT I DON'T.
DROP YOUR WEAPON.
FAILURE TO COMPLY WILL RESULT--
YES! I THINK THEY GOT THAT BIT....
YOU NEED TO TALK TO LYDIA.

LYDIA.
SINDEN...?
THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD GET YOU *OUT* OF HERE IN THIS CONDITION, LYDIA.
AND YOU *KNOW* WHY YOU'RE HERE, DON'T YOU?
OF COURSE, I *FAILED*.
AND THAT'S WHY YOU *PUT* ME IN THIS CONDITION, SINDEN.
JUST FINISH THE JOB, YOU BASTARD.
YES, I'M SORRY. IT WILL PUT AN END TO YOUR PAIN.
WAIT...
THE EGGS... DID YOU RECOVER THEM?
DO YOU HAVE THEM?
WE DO.
MAPPO PREVAILS.

SHE FELL A COUPLA HUNDRED FEET...
BUT THE ANGLE OF THE WINDOWS SLOWED DOWN HER FALL.
STILL BROKE PRETTY MUCH EVERY BONE IN HER BODY THOUGH.
HELL-O...
SHE CERTAINLY LOOKS BROKEN.
IS SHE REALLY STILL ALIVE?
LYDIA--?
MY GOD, THEY KILLED HER...
SWIPE
HEY!
FTAP
SHSHTT
?
SHUNT

SWIPE
I'M SORRY. YOUR FINGERPRINT DOES NOT MATCH RECORDS. ACCESS DENIED.
GIMME A BREAK!
Well, look at that.
NEX GEN specialize in Molecular Cloning, not hospital supplies...
nex gen
LOOKING FOR A MOP TO CLEAN UP YOUR MESS, JACK?
THE GIRL'S DEAD ALL RIGHT. WHAT WAS IT YOU THOUGHT SHE'D TELL ME?
IT BETTER BE GOOD, I LEFT A NICE CURRY ON MY DESK TO COME CHECK UP ON YOU.
HOMSI, YOU DIDN'T SEE THOSE TWO GUYS IN SCRUBS? THE DOOR LOCKED BEHIND THEM...
YOU WANT ME TO SMASH IT DOWN?
HOLD ON! I THINK THERE'S BEEN ENOUGH DESTRUCTION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY TODAY, DON'T YOU?
MAYBE YOU TWO SHOULD JOIN ME DOWNTOWN TO MAKE STATEMENTS. I HOPE YOU HAVE YOUR STORIES STRAIGHT.
SO CLOSE, SWEETY, YOU CAN BE SO SMART, BUT STILL SO STUPID...

OKAY, LET'S BRING THE WAGON ROUND, BOYS.
YOU MUST BE SCARLET.
FINALLY HE NOTICES ME.
WAIT... WHAT?!
This is it...
Every Private Detective's Worst Nightmare... the partner meets the ex-girlfriend.

CHRIS LICHTNER *pinup art*

TULA LOTAY & NEI RUFFINO *cover art*

#4

The Physical Impossibility of Death...

I'm missing something here.

The BODY.

"YOU NEVER *COULD* SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES, COULD YOU, JACK?

"A GUY.
"A GIRL.
"A GUN.
"THE PROSPECT OF BLOOD.

in The Mind of Someone Living
Richard Starkings
Words
Axel Medellin
Pictures
What did I do with Scarlet's body?
"WHY WOULD IT BE SIMPLE?"

BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, JACK...
ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR.
RIGHT, MISTER FLASK?
YER PRETTY CHATTY FOR A GHOST.
WELL, WHO'D'A THOUGHT A ROAD TRIP WITH MY BOYS WOULD BE SO DULL?
ARE WE THERE YET?
I'M REKEYING THE PASSCARD TO YOUR FINGERPRINTS, FARRELL.
WHATEVER DOORS OPEN FOR THE NEXGEN GUY AT THE HOSPITAL SHOULD OPEN FOR YOU.
I SPY WITH MY LI'L EYE, SOMETHING BEGINNING WITH "YOU HOPE SO!"
AS LONG AS HE DOESN'T KNOW IT'S MISSING YET.
YOU'RE AWFUL QUIET, JACK.
WORRYING ABOUT WHAT I MIGHT HAVE SAID TO YOUR PARTNER?
DON'T, SWEETIE. I CAN BE DISCREET, Y'KNOW.
ME TOO -- DIDN'T STOP YOU GOING THROUGH MY MESSAGES THOUGH.
WHAT WORRIES ME IS THAT FLASK CAN SEE YOU AT ALL!
HEY, IF IT WORKS FOR YOU, I AIN'T SEEN NUTHIN'!

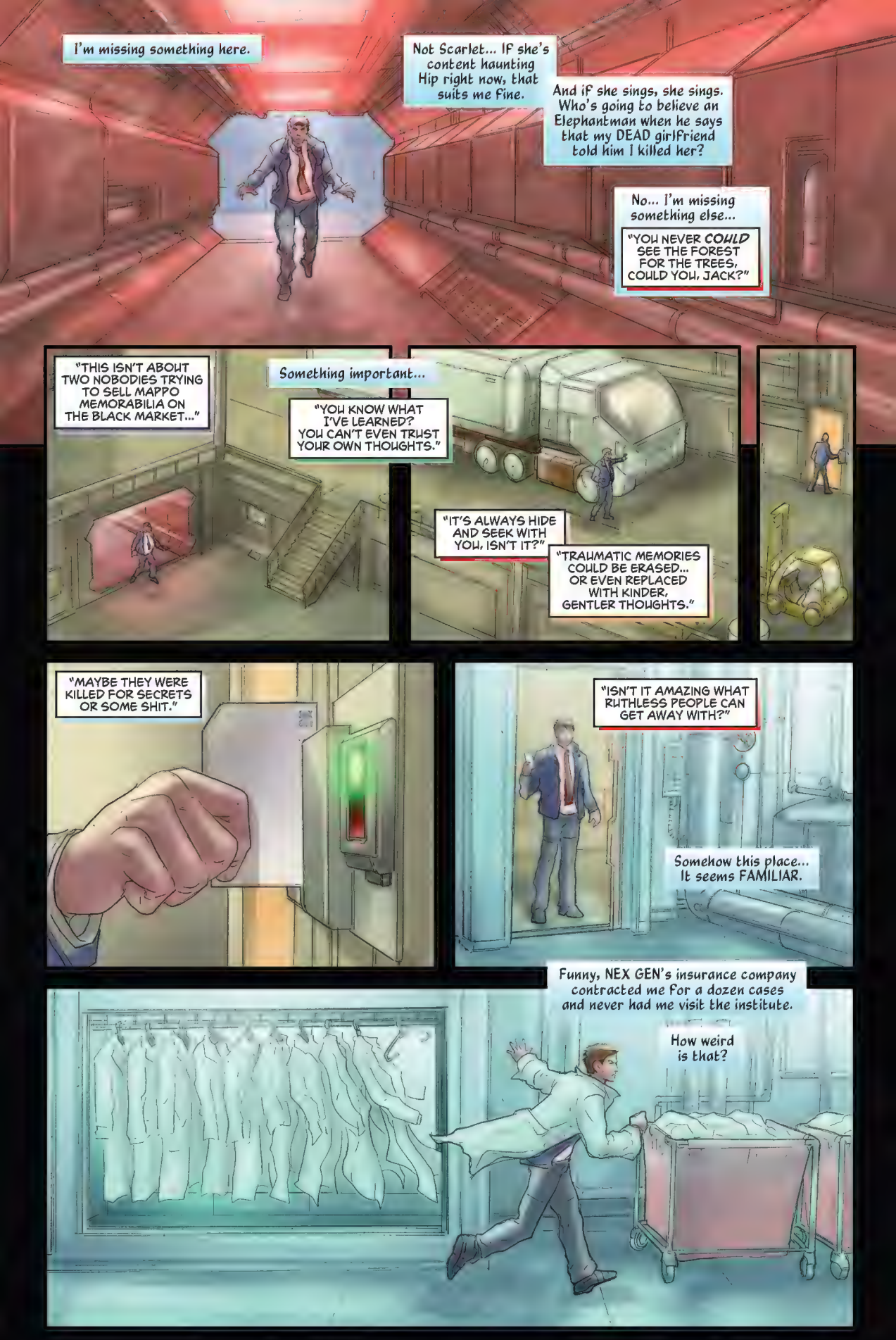
WE'RE JUST GONNA PARK IN PLAIN SIGHT LIKE THAT?
IT'S SHIELDED.
BUT WE'RE NOT...
ARE YOU GONNA TELL ME WE'RE JUST GONNA WALK IN THE FRONT DOOR?
THIS IS ALL SO EXCITING!
I'M NOT, BUT YOU ARE...
I'M GOING IN THROUGH THE LAUNDRY FACILITY ROUND THE BACK.
YOU'RE GONNA DISTRACT THEM.
AND HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO THAT?
I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'VE NOTICED, BUT YOU'RE AN EIGHT FOOT TALL, THOUSAND POUND HIPPO WITH AN ATTITUDE...

NEXGEN INSTITUTE SAN GABRIEL · 2260

"YOU'LL THINK OF SOMETHING."

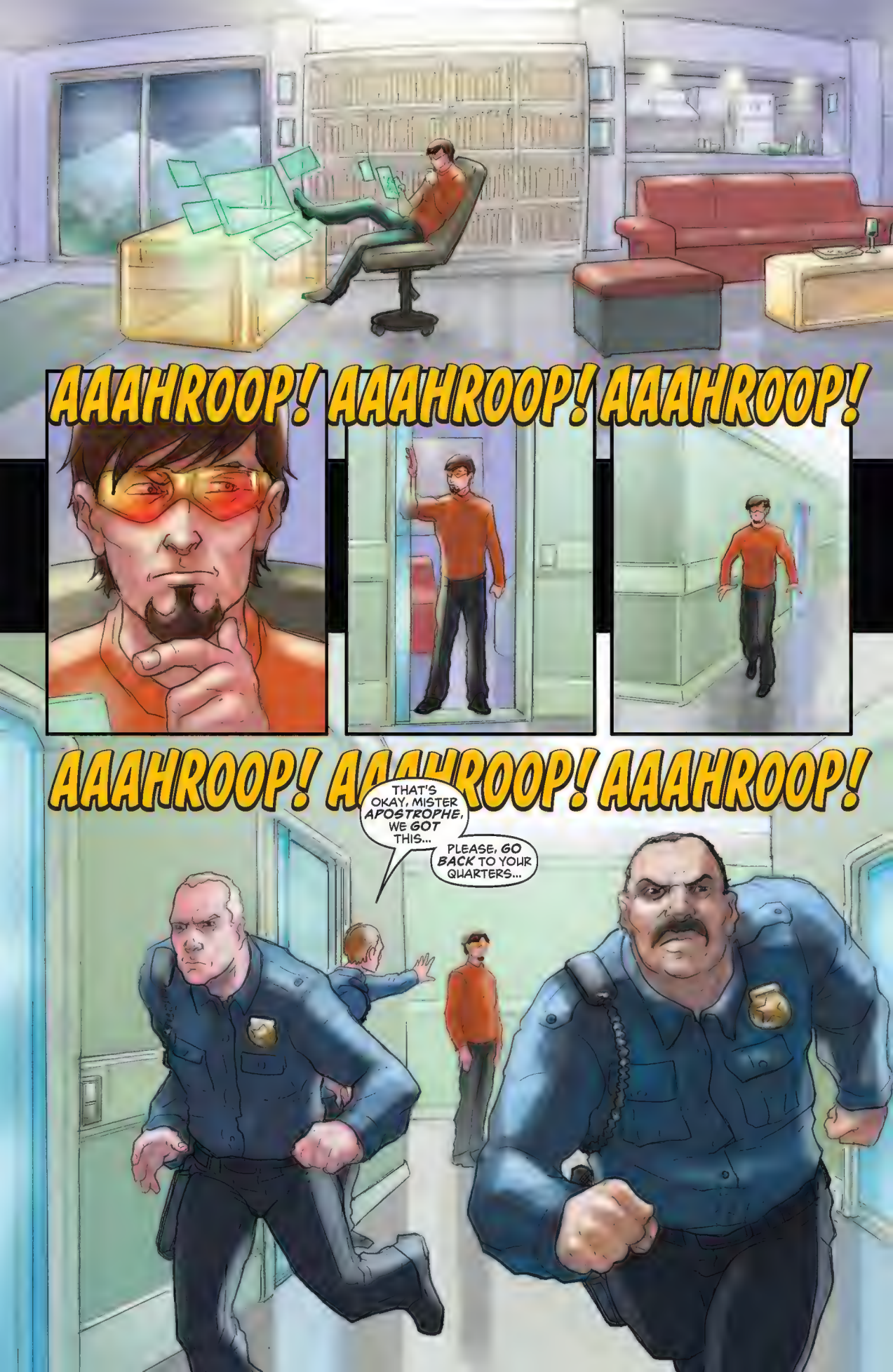
AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK ME HOW FARRELL AND I GOT INVOLVED?
NOPE.
DON'T WORRY, IT WASN'T LIKE A FAIRYTALE OR ANYTHING.
HE WAS A PART OF MY MORNING COFFEE.
"IT WAS A CASUAL FLIRTATION AT FIRST. I'D SEE HIM IN LINE AT PEET'S EVERY OTHER DAY OR SO.
YOU KNOW, I LOVE WHEN IT RAINS IN L.A... BUT DOES IT HAVE TO BE ALL THE TIME?
THIS IS NOTHING... THERE'S SNOW EVERY WINTER WHERE I WORK...
"AFTER WE CHATTED A COUPLE OF TIMES, I STARTED LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING HIM... I EVEN RISKED BEING LATE TO WORK SO THAT WE COULD SPEND MORE TIME TOGETHER.
"ONCE A FEW WEEKS HAD PASSED... I REALIZED I'D KIND OF FALLEN IN LOVE WITH HIM... I WANTED HIM.
"I SEDUCED HIM.
"I DIDN'T WANT TO HURT HIM...
BUT YOU KNOW HOW THESE THINGS GO...
OF COURSE, I NEVER THOUGHT JACK WOULD--
MUD'S BLOOD!

WHAT EXACTLY AM I LOOKING AT?!
Oh, THAT'S VERITY...
TRUTH. READY TO GIVE BIRTH.
IT'S A DAMIEN HIRST ORIGINAL.
WORTH MILLIONS.
THESE GUYS HAVE MONEY THEN.
Oh YEAH... THERE'S ALWAYS MONEY IN MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH, SWEETIE.
NEX GEN GROW CLONES.
MAYBE YOUR SON DIED OF LEUKEMIA...
OR YOUR DOG WAS HIT BY A CAR.
NEX GEN WILL BRING THEM BACK FOR YOU.
PERHAPS YOU'RE A SUGAR DADDY LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT SEX KITTEN.
NEX GEN WILL MAKE ONE FOR YOU.
GENES REMEMBER EVERYTHING. GENES KNOW EVERYTHING.
SHE HAS A NICE BUTT, DON'T YOU THINK?
HMP. FIGURES THAT THE SCALES OF JUSTICE WOULD BE AT THE ASS-END OF TRUTH.
SPOKEN LIKE A PRODUCT OF GENETIC ENGINEERING. THE TRUTH ALWAYS COMES WITH A PRICE.
DON'T IT JUST. HOW DO YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT NEX GEN?
I DIDN'T TELL YOU?
I USED TO WORK HERE.
YOU WHAT--?!
EXCUSE ME.
THIS IS PRIVATE PROPERTY.


I'm missing something here.
Not Scarlet... If she's content haunting Hip right now, that suits me fine.
And if she sings, she sings. Who's going to believe an Elephantman when he says that my DEAD girlfriend told him I killed her?
No... I'm missing something else...
"YOU NEVER COULD SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES, COULD YOU, JACK?"
"THIS ISN'T ABOUT TWO NOBODIES TRYING TO SELL MAPPO MEMORABILIA ON THE BLACK MARKET..."
Something important...
"YOU KNOW WHAT I'VE LEARNED? YOU CAN'T EVEN TRUST YOUR OWN THOUGHTS."
"IT'S ALWAYS HIDE AND SEEK WITH YOU, ISN'T IT?"
"TRAUMATIC MEMORIES COULD BE ERASED... OR EVEN REPLACED WITH KINDER, GENTLER THOUGHTS."
"MAYBE THEY WERE KILLED FOR SECRETS OR SOME SHIT."
"ISN'T IT AMAZING WHAT RUTHLESS PEOPLE CAN GET AWAY WITH?"
Somehow this place... It seems FAMILIAR.
Funny, NEX GEN's insurance company contracted me for a dozen cases and never had me visit the institute.
How weird is that?

THE INSTITUTE IS CLOSED FOR THE DAY. BUT I WONDER IF YOU KNOW; NEX GEN DOES NOT OFFER SERVICES FOR YOUR KIND.
I THINK PERHAPS YOU SHOULD CALL DURING, UH, NORMAL HOURS TO SCHEDULE A VISIT.
MEOWW! HIP, BE CAREFUL, THEY'RE CARRYING GUNS! I FELT THIS ONE UP REAL QUICK...
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, IS IT? I'M SURPRISED YOU TWO CAN THINK AT ALL... THIS MUCH PAST YOUR BEDTIME.
MAYBE I COULD TALK TO, Y'KNOW, A GROWNUP? SOMEONE INSIDE?
I DOUBT IT, HIP, SEEMS LIKE THERE'S NO ONE HOME. LOOKS LIKE JUST THESE TWO PREDATORS.
LEAVE NOW.
OR THERE WILL BE TROUBLE.
FLIK
TROUBLE?
GO AHEAD -- CALL FOR BACK UP OR WHATEVER YOU GUYS DO.
I LOVE TROUBLE!
OOF
THAP
UMPH

STAND BACK, SCARLET...
I'M GOING THROUGH THOSE DOORS AND I MAY NEED MORE BANDAIDS!
Oh, YOU'RE ACTING JUST LIKE JACK!
ALWAYS *IMAGINING* THAT I'M IN THE WAY!
GO FOR IT. I'LL KISS YOU BETTER!
KRRTTSSSH


AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP!
AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP!
THAT'S OKAY, MISTER APOSTROPHE, WE GOT THIS...
PLEASE, GO BACK TO YOUR QUARTERS...

Ah.
AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP!
FLASK.
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I'M ENCOURAGED BY THE FACT THAT THERE'S AN INFORMATION AGENT OUT HERE...
OR I'VE JUST GOT NEW REASONS TO DESPAIR...
AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP! AAAHROOP!
AND WHO IS YOUR FRIEND HERE...?

Here we go...
CRYOGENICS
Cold storage.
NEX GEN's Freezer.
No surprise; just what you'd expect in a molecular cloning facility...
Except for one detail.
What's this shit doing here at NEXGEN...?
"EGGS. MAPPO PRODUCED THOUSANDS OF THEM..."
Is that what this has been all about? Two of NEX GEN's own scientists murdered after stealing from their employers?
A cover up?
HOLY SH!T... THIS IS LIKE A FREAKING MAPPO FARM SHOP!
"THERE ARE ONLY TWO REASONS YOU NEED EGGS, JACK..."
Uhhh-- WHY IS MY HEAD... POUNDING?
"ISN'T IT AMAZING WHAT RUTHLESS PEOPLE CAN GET AWAY WITH?"

"BUT YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY, JACK... ALL'S FAIR IN *LOVE* AND *WAR*."

"YOU NEVER *COULD* SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES, COULD YOU, JACK?"

I CAN SEE YOU, YOU KNOW.
I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE.
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU NEED TO KNOW.
I'VE FOUND SOMEONE ELSE, JACK.
I'VE MOVED ON.
I should have just turned and walked away.
ARE YOU JEALOUS?
CAN I TEMPT YOU WITH JUST ONE MORE KISS?
OR ARE YOU AFRAID OF WHERE MY LIPS MIGHT HAVE BEEN?
HEART ACHE IS FOR AMATEURS, MY LOVE.
WE BOTH KNOW YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SHOOT ME.
GO HOME.
IDIOT.
Left her there. Got on with my life.
I didn't want to KILL her...
I wanted to KEEP her...
But I lost it.
SCARLET... I...
I LOVED YOU!
FTAM FTAM
I gave evidence against a man who murdered his wife once.
The lawyer got him off with VOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER. They used to call it a Crime of Passion.
I THOUGHT...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE THE LOVE OF MY LIFE.
Lawyer didn't call it either one of those. He called it something else...

...the Reptile Brain Defense.
KRK
SKRRKK
WHAT THE FUCK!
The BODY.
"ISN'T IT AMAZING WHAT RUTHLESS PEOPLE CAN GET AWAY WITH?"
"THIS ISN'T ABOUT TWO NOBODIES TRYING TO SELL MAPPO MEMORABILIA ON THE BLACK MARKET..."
What did I do with Scarlet's body?
"RUNNING AROUND STATING THE OBVIOUS, WHILE THE VERY THING THEY'RE LOOKING FOR IS RIGHT UNDER THEIR NOSES."
"WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PREGNANT WOMAN AND A LIGHTBULB?"
"SCARLET... I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE PREGNANT. NOT WHEN I SHOT YOU..."
"NIKKEN WASN'T THE FIRST MADMAN INTENT ON CREATING A RACE OF SUPERMEN. WHY WOULDN'T THERE BE ANOTHER MEGALOMANIAC LOOKING TO PICK UP WHERE HE LEFT OFF?
"HAVE YOU THOUGHT THIS THROUGH?"
"SOME CALL IT COMMERCE...

"SOME CALL IT GROWING SLAVES.

"THERE ARE ONLY TWO REASONS YOU NEED EGGS, JACK..."

"MAKING *BREAKFAST*..."

"OR MAKING *BABIES*..."

"...I THINK EVERY MOTHER KNOWS THAT, DON'T THEY, JACK?
SCARLET?!

#5
BOO COOK cover art

Semper Veritas

The truth always comes with a price.

WELL, THIS IS A *MESS*, ISN'T IT?

Richard Starkings
Words

Axel Medellin
Pictures

With Apologies to Ladrönn, Moritat & Steven Stahlberg

SCARLET... Oh MY GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE?

I found the body.

IT'S OKAY, JACK, YUH-YOU HAD TO KILL ME...
IF YOU EVER TRULY LOVED ME...
SCARLET, NO, PLEASE, I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T--
...WHY WOULD YOU ACCEPT ME BEING IN THE ARMS OF ANOTHER MAN...
MUCH LESS, LET ME BEAR HIS CHILD?
YOU'RE PREGNANT?!
NO... NO...
WHO-- WHO'S THE FATHER?
HERE IT COMES, THE AWFUL TRUTH...
LEAN IN CLOSE, JACK...
MAPPO...
MAPPO IS MY LOVER, NOW...
WHAT?!
NO...
SCARLET?!
YOU'RE ALIVE!

WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?!
SCARLET! WAKE UP!
I DID IT, JACK. I'M THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR.
I KILLED THEM BOTH.
THIS IS MY PUNISHMENT.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHAT KIND OF GHOST ARE YOU?!
PUT THE GUN DOWN, JACK! HEAR ME OUT...
"I WORKED HERE, I FELL IN LOVE HERE. I DIDN'T KNOW HE WAS MARRIED...
"AND NOT TO SOME STAY-AT-HOME WIFE, BUT TO A COLLEAGUE HERE AT NEX GEN."
"I WORKED IN CRYOGENICS... HE'D CHARMED ME, BEDDED ME, AND I HELPED HIM SMUGGLE A FLASK OF EGGS OUT OF THE FACILITY."
"OUR LITTLE NESTEGGS, HE CALLED THEM. THEY GO FOR A SMALL FORTUNE ON THE BLACK MARKET.
"IT WAS A SETUP. I WAS SUCH A DUMBASS.
"BY CHANCE I'D CAUGHT HIS WIFE MAKING EYES AT HIM IN THE LOBBY AND FIGURED OUT THEIR LITTLE GAME. SHE WON'T BE MAKING EYES AT HIM ANY MORE."
"I MADE HIM SHOOT HIS LITTLE BITCH AND HAD HIM EAT A BULLET HIMSELF."

"I HID THE OTHER GUN IN THE FREEZER. IT WASN'T THE ONE I USED TO KILL HIM.
"I'D TALKED MY MAN INTO BUYING THEM FOR ME WHEN HE PROPOSED THE SCAM. THEY WERE IN HIS NAME."
YOU... YOU KILLED THEM...?
BUT, IF YOU'RE ALIVE...
YOU'RE STILL NOT PAYING ATTENTION, JACK...
"I TOOK THE FLASK WITH ME, OF COURSE. I EVEN HAD A BUYER LINED UP.
"BUT NEX GEN TRACKED ME DOWN BEFORE I HAD A CHANCE TO MAKE THE TRANSACTION.
MAN, EVEN UNCONSCIOUS, I'M STILL DAMN SEXY...
UP FOR A THREESOME, JACK?
OF COURSE YOU ARE, YOU PERVERT.
"THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT WHEN I FIRST SAW YOU, WEEKS AGO. JUST ANOTHER CUTE GUY WANTING TO GET INTO MY PANTS.
YOU KNOW, I LOVE WHEN IT RAINS IN L.A... BUT DOES IT HAVE TO BE ALL THE TIME?
THIS IS NOTHING... THERE'S SNOW EVERY WINTER WHERE I WORK...
NOT THAT I BLAME YOU... I MEAN, WHAT MAN, OR WOMAN, CAN RESIST ME?
BUT YOU WEREN'T CHECKING ME OUT...

YOU WERE TAILING ME.
YOU WERE ON NEX GEN'S PAYROLL THAT WHOLE TIME, WEREN'T YOU?
YOU STILL ARE.
WE BOTH ARE.
TO HELL WITH THAT...
I'M GETTING YOU OUT OF HERE...
FTAM
FTAM
PCHAK
PCHAK
JACK! NO! STOP IT!
SCARLET! LET'S GO! PLEASE, WAKE UP!
SMK
YOU CAN'T SAVE HER, MISTER FARRELL.
EVEN THOUGH SHE'S NOT DEAD.
SHE MAY AS WELL BE.

NEX GEN INSTITUTE
SAN GABRIEL • 2260
YOU ARE MY KIND OF ELEPHANTMAN, HIP...
FEW WORDS BUT LOTS OF ACTION!
MIND YOU, THE DOOR WAS UN;OCKED.
MOTHER OF MUD...

AND LOOK AT YOU, ALL BLOODY AGAIN.
ANYTHING I CAN DO TO MAKE IT ALL BETTER?
Uhhh, SCARLET... DID YOU, Um, CHANGE YOUR OUTFIT?
AND WHERE'D YOU GET AN APPLE?
I JUST... SLIPPED INTO SOMETHING MORE COMFORTABLE.
WANNA TAKE A BITE?
WELL, I LOVE ME SOME APPLES, BUT I'LL PASS.
LIKE MY PAL, GRANGER, SAYS...
THE ONLY THING MORE RIDICULOUS THAN A MAN CHASING AFTER HIS HAT...
IS AN ELEPHANTMAN CHASING AFTER A WOMAN!
FREEZE!
PITY. WELL, AS I ALWAYS SAY...
SO MANY MEN...
SO LITTLE TIME...

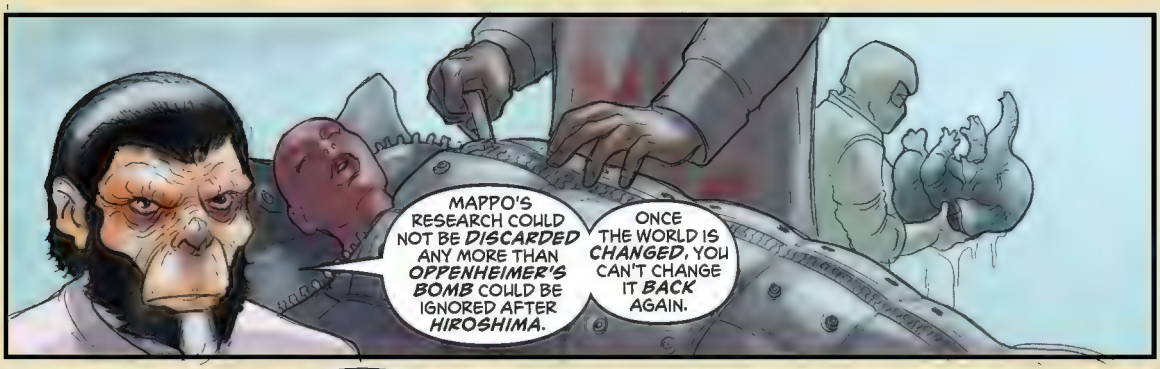
GOOD EVENING, MISTER FLASK.
MY NAME IS RAVEN.
WELCOME TO THE NEX GEN INSTITUTE.

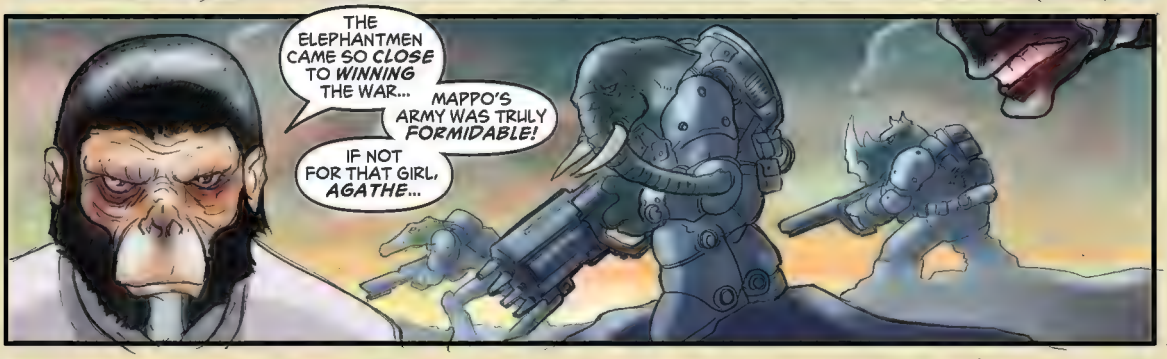
I LIKED SCARLET A LOT.
SHE WAS STRONG-WILLED. INDEPENDENT. THOROUGH.
THE BEST IN HER DEPARTMENT.
CHILD-BEARING HIPS.
JUST THE KIND OF WOMAN NEX GEN LOOKS FOR..
SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE CROSSED THEM.
CROSSED THEM? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HOW CAN SHE BE HERE? SHE'S DEAD, SHE DIED IN MY ARMS!
LOOK, I REMEMBER--
YES, WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU REMEMBER, MISTER FARRELL?
A FOREST? A COUPLE OF RAPTORS, MAYBE?
SCARLET SITTING ON A BRIDGE WAITING FOR YOU?
THOSE AREN'T YOUR MEMORIES; THEY'RE HERS. WE'VE BEEN HARVESTING THEM.
YOU'VE BEEN TETHERED TO HER THOUGHT PROCESSES SINCE THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE.
WHATEVER'S GOING ON IN HER HEAD AS SHE... SLEEPS HERE -- HER FANTASIES, HOPES AND FEARS --
NANO RECEPTORS ATTACHED TO YOUR BRAIN STEM ARE FEEDING THEM RIGHT INTO YOUR FRONTAL LOBE.
WHAT?! HOW DID YOU...?
I HAVEN'T BEEN HERE BEFORE! WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON?
HOW LONG HAS YOUR NOSE BEEN BLEEDING, JACK?
IT'S TYPICAL OF THIS KIND OF NANO TETHERING.
AND, AS YOU CAN SEE, SCARLET IS HERE. INCAPACITATED, BUT STILL ALIVE.

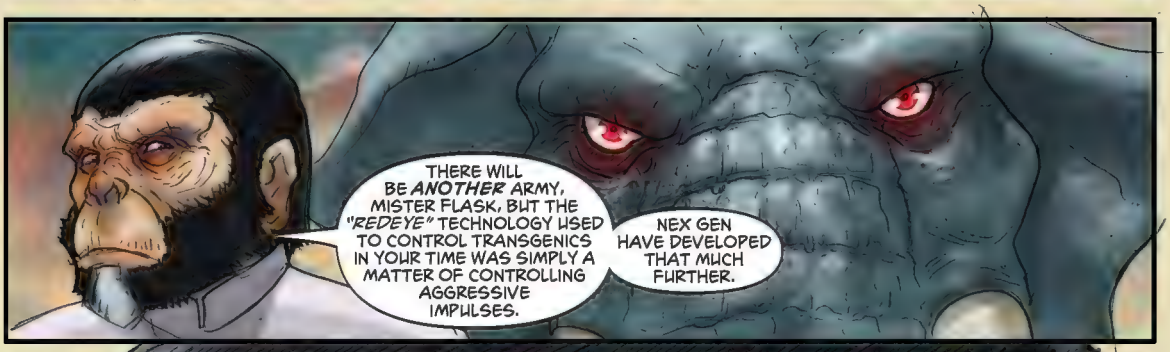
WHAT? THAT'S JUST--
JACK, DON'T LISTEN TO HIM. PLEASE.
NEX GEN HAD YOU ON HER TAIL FOR WEEKS. THEY GAVE YOU THE RUN OF THIS PLACE, AND YOU GAVE THEM THE HEADS UP WHEN SHE SMUGGLED THE EGGS OUT OF HERE.
BUT THEY DIDN'T WANT YOU RETAINING ANY OF THAT INFORMATION, ASKING QUESTIONS WHEN SHE WENT MISSING.
SO... I WAS TASKED WITH CREATING A DIFFERENT SCENARIO FOR YOU... ONE WHICH WOULD KEEP YOU DISTRACTED AND QUIET, ONE IN WHICH... YOU HAD KILLED SCARLET.
JACK, PLEASE, LOOK AT ME!
I AM SORRY ABOUT THAT...
YOU CAN'T JUST LEAVE ME! GET ME OUT!
DUDE, I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR DEAL IS...
JUST GET SCARLET OUT OF THAT MACHINE!
NOW!
WHOA!
IF I DO THAT, SHE'S DEAD FOR SURE. THEY IMPREGNATED HER TWO DAYS AGO. SHE'S CARRYING A SIX WEEK OLD TEEGEE ALREADY.
WHERE WOULD YOU GO TO GET RID OF IT, MY FRIEND? ALL ROADS LEAD BACK HERE. TO HARVEST, OR TO NEX GEN. TO PROMETHEAN. TO MAPPO. THEY'RE ALL THE SAME.
IS SHE TALKING TO YOU RIGHT NOW, JACK?
I'M SORRY. I TETHERED YOU TO HER SUBCONSCIOUS. BUT IT'S JUST NANOBOTS TRIGGERING THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE IN YOUR SYNAPSES.
HE'S LYING, SWEETIE. LOOK AT ME. I'M REAL.
RIGHT BESIDE YOU.
PLEASE, MY LOVE, GET ME OUT.
AT A PURELY EMOTIONAL LEVEL, YOU'RE HER BEST OPTION.
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS HERE WHO NEED SAVING?
SHE'S A STRONG WOMAN. SHE DOESN'T LIKE TO BE VULNERABLE LIKE THIS.
SHE WON'T GIVE UP. AND I RESPECT HER FOR THAT. BUT IT'S NO GOOD.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET OUT OF HERE FOR MONTHS, AND I'M CONSCIOUS.
JACK, YOU CAN'T SET HER FREE... BUT I CAN TAKE HER OUT OF YOUR HEAD...
WHAT?!
JACK, PLEASE...
DON'T.
HOW? HOW WOULD YOU DO THAT?

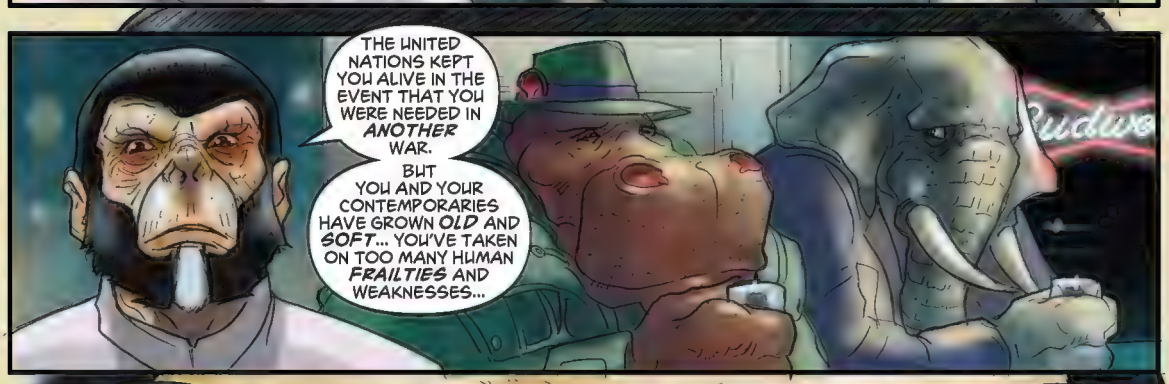
SO I ASK TO SPEAK TO A GROWN UP.
AND THEY SEND ME, WHAT? A MONKEY'S UNCLE?
CHARMED, I'M SURE.
A CHIMP NAMED AFTER A BIRD?
I DON'T LIKE THIS GUY, HIP.
YES, I'M A HYBRID LIKE YOU -- HALF HUMAN, HALF APE.
AND YES, I'M OLD, OLDER THAN YOU EVEN; HIERONYMOUS FLASK, THE FIRST OF THE ELEPHANTMEN.
HOWEVER, I WAS MAPPO'S FIRST TRUE HYBRID.
BUT I WAS CONSIDERED TOO SMART FOR WARFARE. TOO WEAK.
SO MAPPO LOWERED THEIR SIGHTS. THEY WERE LOOKING FOR BRAWN OVER BRAIN.
YOU'RE TRYING TO HURT MY FEELINGS?
WHERE NIKKEN AND MAPPO ARE CONCERNED, I JUST DON'T HAVE ANY.
WELL, WHAT THEY REALLY WANTED WERE TRUE PREDATORS LIKE DAISY AND MAISIE HERE.
DINOSAUR HYBRIDS? TELL ME YOU'RE KIDDING.

CLIENTS ARE ALWAYS OVERAWED WHEN THEY DISCOVER THAT NEX GEN RECREATED RAPTORS FROM PREHISTORIC DNA...
THERE ALWAYS HAS TO BE A REPTILE IN AN ADAM AND EVE STORY.
OF COURSE, THE RAPTORS ATE THEIR CREATOR AND HAD TO BE DESTROYED. THE SCULPTS WERE MADE TO PRESERVE THEIR MEMORY.
IMPRESSIVE, NO?
I'M IMPRESSED THAT THEY TURNED ON THEIR CREATORS. THERE'S ALWAYS GONNA BE TROUBLE IN PARADISE, PAL.
THE MISSING WOMEN. THEY'RE HERE, AREN'T THEY? LYDIA -- SHE WAS WORKING FOR YOU?
CLONING OLD PETS OR DEAD CHILDREN IS JUST A FRONT, RIGHT?
YOU'RE ASTUTE FOR A MUNT, FLASK. NEX GEN TRACKED DOWN MAPPO OPERATIVES FROM ALL AROUND THE WORLD -- INCLUDING ME -- AND REINITIATED THE TRANSGENICS PROGRAM.
YES, THE WOMEN ARE HERE....
AND FULL OF SEED.
SO, OTHER THAN YOUR BOYS IN BLUE AND THEIR POPGUNS HERE, WHAT'S TO STOP ME WALKING OUT THE DOOR AND BLOWING THE WHISTLE ON THIS OPERATION?
Oh, MISTER FLASK, DID YOU REALLY THINK WE WEREN'T READY FOR YOU?
YOU MEAN... THIS IS SOME KIND OF TRAP?
NOT A TRAP, NO.
MORE OF A TRIAL RUN.


MAPPO'S RESEARCH COULD NOT BE DISCARDED ANY MORE THAN OPPENHEIMER'S BOMB COULD BE IGNORED AFTER HIROSHIMA.
ONCE THE WORLD IS CHANGED, YOU CAN'T CHANGE IT BACK AGAIN.


THE ELEPHANTMEN CAME SO CLOSE TO WINNING THE WAR...
MAPPO'S ARMY WAS TRULY FORMIDABLE!
IF NOT FOR THAT GIRL, AGATHE...


THERE WILL BE ANOTHER ARMY, MISTER FLASK, BUT THE "REDEYE" TECHNOLOGY USED TO CONTROL TRANSGENICS IN YOUR TIME WAS SIMPLY A MATTER OF CONTROLLING AGGRESSIVE IMPULSES.
NEX GEN HAVE DEVELOPED THAT MUCH FURTHER.


THE UNITED NATIONS KEPT YOU ALIVE IN THE EVENT THAT YOU WERE NEEDED IN ANOTHER WAR.
BUT YOU AND YOUR CONTEMPORARIES HAVE GROWN OLD AND SOFT... YOU'VE TAKEN ON TOO MANY HUMAN FRAILTIES AND WEAKNESSES...

THE NEW TRANSGENICS WILL BE UTTERLY RUTHLESS.
WE WILL CONTROL THEIR THOUGHTS, THEIR MEMORIES, DREAMS, REFLECTIONS. THEIR EVERY INKLING.
IF WE DON'T LIKE THEIR MENTAL PROCESSES, WE WILL REWRITE THEM.

THIS IS THE ENGRAM CONTROL CENTER... KIND OF A MEMORY TRACE SWITCHBOARD.

THE WOMEN YOU SEE HERE ARE JUST ***PROJECTIONS***, BUT THEIR MINDS WILL BE TETHERED TO SOMEONE LIKE YOU.

EVEN THEIR FANTASIES AND ***SPECULATIONS*** ARE ENCODED HERE...

EVENTUALLY, THEY WILL BE CHANNELLED AND TRANSMITTED TO A FRIEND, A LOVER OR A FAMILY MEMBER.

EACH WILL CARRY THEM LIKE A GUILTY SECRET.

AS YOU CARRIED SCARLET.

THIS IS ***SICK***.

I KNEW I'D CHOSEN WELL, JACK. YOU'VE RESTORED MY FAITH IN MEN... YOU'RE MY HERO.

THAT'S MY PROJECTION THERE.

WHY, SCARLET...?

WHY DID YOU ***CHOOSE*** ME?

BECAUSE EVEN IN THE BRIEF MOMENTS WE WERE TOGETHER...

I KNEW YOU WERE A ***ROMANTIC***.

BECAUSE YOU ***ADORE*** WOMEN... YOU ADORED ***ME***... BECAUSE...

BECAUSE THAT'S THE WAY I WROTE HER PROGRAM.

ENOUGH! ENOUGH ***BULLSHIT***. UNHOOK SCARLET RIGHT NOW.

I CAN'T, JACK... YOU AND I ARE JUST AS MUCH PRISONERS HERE AS SHE IS.

YOU CAN WAVE THAT GUN AROUND AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE. I CAN ***UNTETHER*** YOU, BUT SHE HAS TO ***STAY***.

NEX GEN NEEDED TO TEST MY NANOTECH PROGRAMMING. YOU AND SCARLET PRACTICALLY *VOLUNTEERED*.

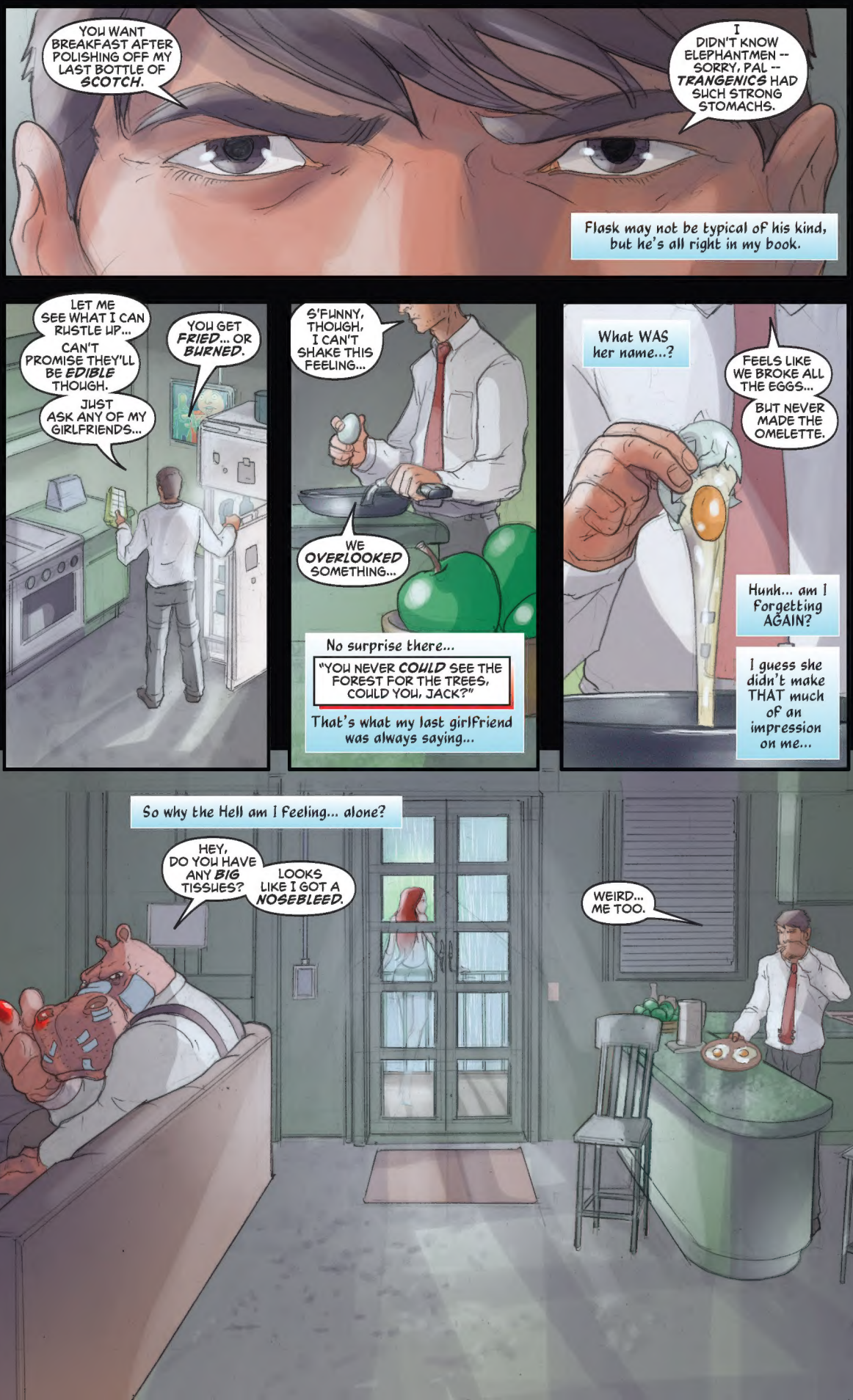
YOU WERE LIKE A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN.
OR HELL.
SO... THIS SETUP OF YOURS... THIS WHOLE FREAKING MIND FUCK! WHAT -- WHAT'S IT FOR?!
THOSE WOMEN ARE CARRYING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TRANSGENICS.
THE NANOBOTS THAT ENABLE NEX GEN TO MANIPULATE MEMORIES WILL BE PASSED TO EACH TEEGEE AS THEY GESTATE IN UTERO VIA THEIR MOTHER'S BLOODSTREAM.
AND THIS ISN'T NEW. I'VE LEARNED THAT THE U.N HAD SOME SUCCESS TETHERING THE ELEPHANTMEN YEARS AGO.
THEY WANTED TO USE THE EXTANT MAPPO TECHNOLOGY TO IMPLANT MEMORIES AND MANIPULATE EACH ELEPHANTMAN'S SENSES...
"AND THEY DID SO WITH SOME SUCCESS... THEY WERE ALL TETHERED EMOTIONALLY TO ONE WOMAN... TO KEEP THEM CALM, TO KEEP THEM IN TOUCH WITH THEIR HUMAN SIDE."
YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
"YOU MEAN, THE AFRICAN WOMAN, HORN'S GIRL... SAHARA?!"
THEY ONLY HAVE TO SEE HER AND THEIR NEURO-TRANSMITTERS GO CRAZY. THEIR ENDORPHIN AND GABA LEVELS SHOOT UP.
WHY DO YOU THINK THERE ARE SO MANY DESERT BREEZES ADS IN EVERY CITY?
DO YOU REALLY THINK HER FASHION SENSE IS THAT POPULAR?
THAT'S WHAT I CALL A DANGEROUS WOMAN. PERISH THE THOUGHT ANYTHING SHOULD EVER HAPPEN TO HER.
JACK, WE'RE NOT ALL DANGEROUS.
LOOK AT ME. DON'T YOU WANT ME? AM I NOT TRULY BEAUTIFUL?
SCARLET... I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
TURNS OUT I DON'T REALLY KNOW YOU AT ALL.
TURNS OUT YOU WERE HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH SOME OTHER GUY.

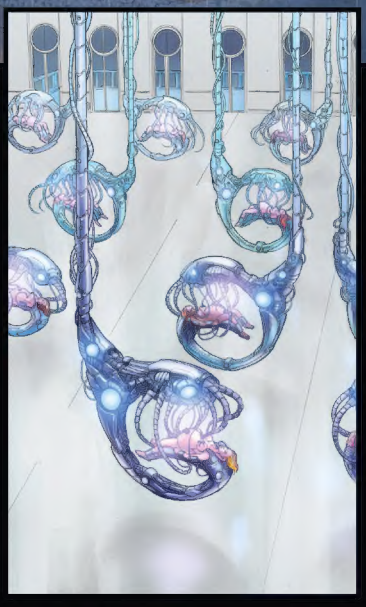
SWEETIE... HE WAS JUST A LOVER, AN ACCOMPLICE... HE DIDN'T MEAN ANYTHING TO ME.
HE WASN'T LIKE YOU, JACK... I LOVE YOU... I ADORE YOU.
JACK, SHE SMUGGLED FERTILIZED TRANSGENIC EGGS OUT OF THE INSTITUTE.
SHE KILLED TWO OF THEIR TOP RESEARCHERS.
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE WALKING OUT OF HERE WITH SCARLET IN YOUR ARMS?
JACK, PLEASE.
SAY SOMETHING!
JUST PRESS THIS BUTTON AND YOU'LL FORGET HER.
YOU'LL FORGET HER, ME AND EVERYTHING YOU WITNESSED HERE.
FINE! GO AHEAD!
DELETE ME FROM YOUR LIFE!
NO. I CAN'T DO IT.
I ALREADY KILLED HER ONCE.
I CAN'T DO IT AGAIN.
OF COURSE NOT, I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE ASKED YOU TO DO THAT.
I GUESS I WANTED IT TO BE YOUR CHOICE.
BUT IT'S ACTUALLY THE ONLY ONE YOU HAVE.
Oh

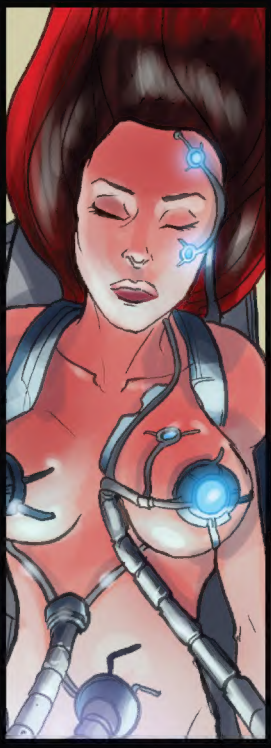
WHY TELL ME ALL THIS? IF YOU'RE GONNA KILL ME, DO IT NOW. DON'T THINK YOU'LL BE ABLE TO KEEP ME HERE.
HIP... BE CAREFUL... I THINK -- I THINK SOMETHING HAPPENED TO JACK...
CAN IT, SCARLET. THEY CAN'T JUST DISAPPEAR AN INFORMATION AGENT.
Ah, SCARLET. I'M SO GLAD YOU'VE BEEN SEEING HER TOO. SUCH A SWEET AND UNEXPECTED BENEFIT OF THIS WHOLE EXERCISE.
SEEMS LIKE THE NANOBOTS WE THOUGHT WERE RUSTING AWAY IN YOUR SYSTEM CAN STILL PICK UP NEW SIGNALS.
MAPPO ENGINEERS WERE, FRANKLY, YEARS AHEAD OF THEIR TIME.
I THINK YOU'D BETTER LET ME OUTTA HERE.
YEAH, MAYBE I AM A BIT RUSTY...
BUT I CAN STILL WIPE THAT SMIRK OFF YOUR FACE...
EVEN IF YOUR BOYS PUT A FEW BULLETS IN ME WHILE I'M AT IT.
Oh... DO YOU THINK YOU'RE SAFE NOW?
TEHACHAPI.
WHUH...
WHAT...?
THANK YOU FOR VISITING.
HIP!
NO... PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME...

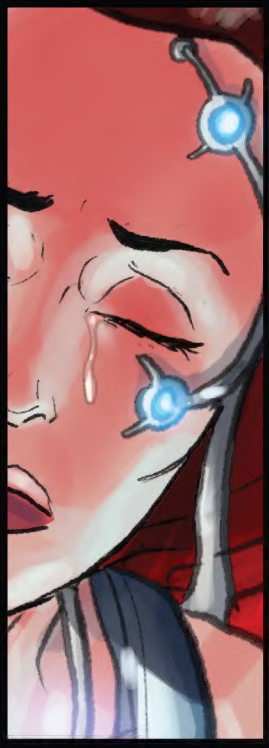
HIP?
RAVEN...? WHAT--WHAT HAPPENED?
BOYS?
JACK?
FARRELL... JACK, PLEASE HELP ME...
SKRRKK
Oh
PLEASE...
DON'T HURT ME...

WHUH...
WHAT...?
I'd never given a second thought to the Elephantmen before.
I certainly never thought I'd wake up to find one sleeping on my SOFA.
I SAID, I JUST DON'T GET IT... A MURDER/SUICIDE AFTER ALL.
WE'RE OFF THE CASE, NEX GEN HAVE A WITNESS SAW THE WHOLE THING FROM HIS WINDOW ACROSS THE STREET.
UHHH.. MY HEAD...
Life's full of surprises, that's for sure.
AND COMMISSIONER HOMSI SAYS FORENSIX CONFIRM.
DUDE BLEW HER BRAINS OUT, TURNED THE GUN, THEN BLAM! DIVORCED!
CHEAPER, I GUESS.
THESE INSURANCE JOBS NEVER REALLY PAY OFF.
ALWAYS THE SAME IN MY EXPERIENCE. A GUY, A GIRL, A GUN.
THERE'S ALWAYS GONNA BE BLOOD.
BUT I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.
WHY WOULD YOU KILL THE WOMAN YOU LOVED?
END A RELATIONSHIP IN SUCH A FINAL MANNER?
WAY--WAIT A MINUTE.
WASN'T THERE... SOMETHING ABOUT... EGGS?
EGGS?
I'M IMPRESSED...


YOU WANT BREAKFAST AFTER POLISHING OFF MY LAST BOTTLE OF SCOTCH.
I DIDN'T KNOW ELEPHANTMEN -- SORRY, PAL -- TRANGENICS HAD SUCH STRONG STOMACHS.
Flask may not be typical of his kind, but he's all right in my book.
LET ME SEE WHAT I CAN RUSTLE UP...
CAN'T PROMISE THEY'LL BE EDIBLE THOUGH.
JUST ASK ANY OF MY GIRLFRIENDS...
YOU GET FRIED... OR BURNED.
S'FUNNY, THOUGH, I CAN'T SHAKE THIS FEELING...
WE OVERLOOKED SOMETHING...
No surprise there...
"YOU NEVER COULD SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES, COULD YOU, JACK?"
That's what my last girlfriend was always saying...
What WAS her name...?
FEELS LIKE WE BROKE ALL THE EGGS...
BUT NEVER MADE THE OMELETTE.
Hunh... am I forgetting AGAIN?
I guess she didn't make THAT much of an impression on me...
So why the Hell am I feeling... alone?
HEY, DO YOU HAVE ANY BIG TISSUES?
LOOKS LIKE I GOT A NOSEBLEED.
WEIRD... ME TOO.







"And then quietly, without wanting it, we pass from Heart to Memory."
Gerard Presgurvic, Romeo et Juliette: De la Haine a l'Amour.

TIM SALE & BOO COOK *pinup art*

"2260 AD: HUMAN/ANIMAL HYBRIDS HAVE BEEN INTEGRATED INTO A SOCIETY NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN. RICHARD STARKINGS' SHARP, NUANCED WRITING WEAVES SOCIAL COMMENTARY INTO THIS ENTERTAINING SCI-FI STORY SET IN A FUTURE LOS ANGELES. A WONDERFUL JUMPING ON POINT."

"ARTIST AXEL MEDELLIN CREATES THE BLADE RUNNERISH NOIR ATMOSPHERE OF THE SERIES BY FOCUSING ON DETECTIVE JACK FARRELL AND AGENT HIP FLASK, CHARACTERS WHO LOOK LIKE THEY'VE SEEN AND LIVED THROUGH EVERYTHING..."
SOUNDONSIGHT

COMIC SPECTRUM

"A WHODUNNIT? WRAPPED IN A SHROUD OF SUSPENSE. AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT!"
RED HEADED MULE

"FILLED WITH INTELLIGENCE AND HEART!"
NERDS ON THE ROCKS

PULP! SCIENCE! FICTION!

"YOU MUST CHECK IT OUT!"
J.J. ABRAMS

"ONE OF THE ABSOLUTE BEST COMICS ON THE MARKET!" JOHN LAYMAN

"BOLD, MYTHIC & HEARTBREAKINGLY COOL, STARKINGS' UNIVERSE IS... A BREED APART" ANDY SERKIS

SCIENCE FICTION®
RATED M / MATURE
image
imagecomics.com